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THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE

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AUGUST
1936

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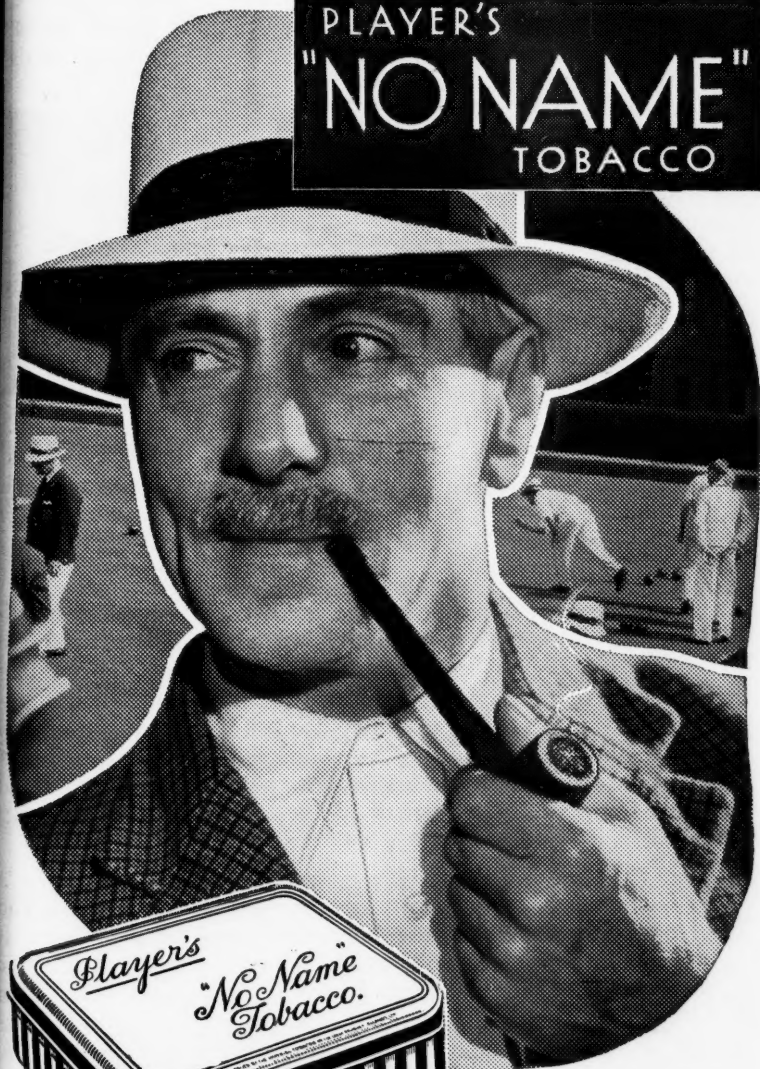
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BOOK NOTES FOR AUGUST

A New Romance

FEELING that the reputation of the mysterious house known as Pine Point was the result of local gossip and idle speculation, Page Hazeltyne, nurse, set off light-heartedly to commence her duties with the old lady who owned the house. But once there things began to happen that first made her wonder, then alarmed her, and finally involved her in unscrupulous intrigues, calculated to gain illegitimate possession of the wealth of her aged patient. This tale is one of Mrs. Norris's best, and events move quickly from the moment the diamond is lost until the heroine's discovery that the old lady's heir is being poisoned slowly by Chinese drugs ends with them both being marooned on a rock in the Pacific. The author has written many good novels but few that are richer in interest and incident than *The Mystery of Pine Point*.



KATHLEEN NORRIS.

A Library List

As August is the middle of the publishing year, it is worthwhile to look back at the books already published with the intention to catch up, in this holiday month, with the reading that pressure of business, preparations for holidays and the hundred and one concerns of everyday life have so far made impossible. A good list should not be confined to books of one particular kind, and amongst the titles that follow will be found sufficient variety of style, matter and scene to last out and make enjoyable any holiday—even a wet one.

Travel

MISS FREYA STARK's book, *The Southern Gates of Arabia*, can quite justifiably be called the travel book of the year. It has received commendation from all quarters. Few writers are dubbed classic as a result of two books, but there has never been any doubt as to the permanent value and deserved survival of Miss Stark's present book and her previous one, *The Valleys of the Assassins*. Walter Starkie is also a traveller of great individuality. His latest book, *Don Gypsy*, completes the account of his gypsy wanderings in Spain begun in *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* and should provide everything for those readers who like the out-of-the-ordinary.

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BOOK NOTES FOR AUGUST

Reminiscence and Biography

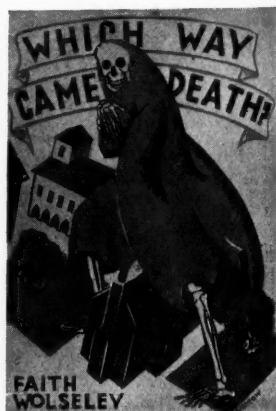
At the head of any list of autobiographical works must come *The Story of San Michele*, Axel Munthe's famous book. By issuing the Illustrated Edition the publisher, according to *The Observer*, 'has done the one thing that remained to be done,' and it is now embellished by 120 photographs worthy of the text. Four important biographies are *Lord Inchcape*, by Hector Bolitho, which, according to *The Times*, is 'a satisfying picture of one of the most remarkable men of our time'; *The Last of the Empresses*, Signor Daniele Varè's brilliant picture of the great Chinese Empress Tzu-Hsi; *Sir Sidney Low*, by Desmond Chapman-Huston, which deals in a masterly fashion with the life and career of that most capable of journalists; and *Honoraria Lawrence*, Maud Diver's recently published book on her ancestress, the charming wife of Sir Henry Lawrence of Lucknow fame. A book of reminiscence which is also causing much stir is the provocative *Anonymous, 1871-1935*, a picture of literary and artistic life from a pen at once lively and original and multitudinously informed.



Tzu-Hsi.

Fiction

It is not often that a murder mystery is written with such skilful preparation of character and scene as is in *Which Way Came Death?* by Faith Wolseley. It is not a 'shocker,' for the murder serves more as a point from which to develop the many characters rather than as the central interest itself. As *Punch* says of it, 'not for many months have I come across a novel which can be so confidently recommended to readers of detective fiction.'



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THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

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JOSEPH CONRAD—TWELVE YEARS AFTER.

BY RICHARD COLENUTT.

JOSEPH CONRAD passed from us on 3rd August, 1924. He was then in his sixty-seventh year. When he looked back to his childhood in Poland, his life must surely have appeared to him a full one and, as he might perhaps himself have expressed it, 'not altogether unproductive.' His friends hoped and expected that he had still a number of years of creative activity before him; but his strength, undermined by thirty years of neuralgic gout, collapsed rather suddenly after a heart attack.

When he died, his very high place in English literature was generally acknowledged by those best fitted to judge. Are we able, after the lapse of the comparatively few intervening years, to add anything useful to what was then said and written about him? Does the perspective afforded by even twelve years' distance in time now cause us to modify to any important extent the views held about him while he was still actively at work?

We should first, perhaps, take notice of the fact that Conrad has never been one of those writers to gain universal acceptance. He was unusually slow to gain recognition from more than a small, but discerning band of admirers, and when, after many years, a wider public at length discovered him, there were always some who made difficulties about him. That has continued until the present day. Furthermore, sufficient time has elapsed since his death for a fresh generation of young readers to come to years of discretion. It is right and natural that each succeeding wave of readers should seek its gods in its own generation, and be willing to concern itself only with what is really the best of that which has gone before.

The reasons for the differences of opinion about Conrad seem to lead us at once into the more intimate mysteries of his art. His first book, *Almayer's Folly*, appeared in 1894, so that the period over which his works were published occupied almost exactly thirty years. Born in Poland in 1857, he had taken up the life of a seaman at the age of eighteen, and for eighteen arduous years had sailed the oceans of the world in sailing ships and steamers,

first before the mast, then as officer, later still as master. While still at sea he had begun to write in a tentative way and, when his health broke down, he took up the profession of a writer.

During more than half of the thirty years of his literary period he was comparatively little known to the great majority of the reading public at a time when the names of Kipling, Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy were household words, not to mention a host of writers equally well known then, though perhaps less assured of permanence hereafter. But from the first Conrad had been 'spotted' by the people who really knew—by the best of the critics and, especially, by his brethren of the craft of the pen. If Spenser is the poets' poet, it can be said of Conrad more than of any other English writer that from the beginning he has been the novelists' novelist. He wrote to Arthur Symons in 1911: 'You must not forget that you exist *pour les esprits d'élite*, which is the best sort of existence.' No truer word could have been said of Conrad himself. One has only to glance at his correspondence with the other writers to see what they thought of him. The list of his active correspondents includes Wells, Galsworthy, Bennett, W. H. Hudson, Stephen Crane, Sir Edmund Gosse, Cunningham Graham, Norman Douglas, Henry James, Ford Madox Ford, E. V. Lucas, Hugh Walpole, and many more. It is possible that one artist is naturally prone to appraise the work of his fellow-craftsmen more generously than is the professional critic. Yet surely in Conrad's case there is something very much more than friendly encouragement and commendation. It amounts to the recognition of mastery. Galsworthy could go so far as to say that 'he is the only writer of late years who will enrich English literature to any extent.'

It was *Chance*, published in 1912, which made Conrad known to a great many people who had never heard of him before; that is to say, years after the appearance of such masterpieces as *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Lord Jim*, *Nostromo*, and *The Mirror of the Sea*. This is really difficult to understand. For not only is *Chance* far from being Conrad's best work, but it is not even particularly easy to read. It is long and rambling. In it Conrad has carried to extreme lengths his method of employing eye-witnesses or commentators who, one after another, tell a portion of the tale, but who also interpose themselves between the reader and the principal characters.

I do not wish to underrate *Chance*. With a minimum of thematic

material Conrad has contrived in the persons of the lovers to fashion two characters who are both vital and convincing. Indeed, Flora de Barral is the most convincing of all his women. And how trite the whole story might have been in less capable hands. The only reason for mentioning *Chance* at all is because with its publication Conrad's popularity immediately increased vastly. The explanation usually given is that it is a love story. But this will hardly do alone, for much the same could have been said with equal truth about some of his earlier works. Whatever the explanation, *Chance* marked a great extension of Conrad's public. Thereafter, both his popularity and his reputation increased steadily until his death.

Yet there were always doubters, and since his death the doubters have sometimes been very outspoken. Indeed, 'doubters' hardly expresses with sufficient force what is sometimes direct opposition. A year or two ago I read the opinion of a critic—I imagine a very young one—who tried to maintain that Conrad's only real claim to attention was his ability to depict tropical scenery and conditions of weather. He even went on to argue that it practically resolved itself into writing about the weather at sea, and that after a short time that sort of thing became very dull. Which would be true enough if the premises were correct.

For some time past the present writer has felt bound to recognise that there are two quite distinct and contradictory views about Conrad. On the one side are those who are inclined to see in him the greatest writer in English prose of our century, one whom Germans would include under the term *Dichter*. On the other are those who think, not only that his work is dead already, but that it never really ever came to life; like our friend of the 'weather' criticisms.

A young lady, a university graduate, came to the present writer once and said: 'You know, I feel it is a terrible admission, but I simply can't read Conrad at all.' I thought at one time the explanation might be that he appealed more to men than to women. But not long afterwards a relative, an old lady over seventy, read *Nostromo* and *Victory* straight off, one after the other, not only without difficulty but obviously with the greatest enjoyment. Such divergences of opinion must have some basis. Is any reasonable explanation possible? I think there is.

I suggest, first, that we have to acknowledge that Conrad's work is uneven in its quality, and this despite the fact that he him-

self always took the greatest pains with it. But he was temperamental in a way in which none of the other greater English writers of his time were. In the twentieth century no other literary spring wells up so bright and clear as Conrad's at its best. But there were times when the source seems troubled and the resultant flow confused and slow-moving. It is so with all writers, more or less. With Conrad the contrasts are great and obvious.

Bad health alone had much to do with it. In 1890 he had accepted an appointment on a small steamer far up the Congo. His health quickly broke down under the conditions and he was left for the rest of his life a victim to chronic neuralgic gout, which made existence an intermittent martyrdom. His letters abound with references to it and show the extent to which it affected him, in mind as well as in body. Quotations could be multiplied. The following is from a letter to Galsworthy (5th June, '09) after one of his bouts :

' . . . Well it was pretty bad ; the horrible depression worst of all. It is rather awful to lie helpless and think of the passing days, of the lost time. But the most cruel time is afterwards, when I crawl out of bed to sit before the table, take up the pen,—and have to fling it away in sheer despair of ever writing a line. And I've had thirteen years of it, if not more. Anyway, all my writing life. I think that in this light the fourteen vols. (up-to-date) are something of an achievement. But it's a poor consolation.

The way was long. The wind was cold,
The minstrel was infernal old ;
His harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was stolen by an organ boy,—

That's how I feel.'

He might have added that he was at any rate keeping his courage, and not losing his sense of humour. Even when his health was good, to clothe ideas in words was always a struggle, a wrestling with difficulties. Like Beethoven's, his spirit travailed in creation, and this apart from any difficulties he may have had with the English language. From the spontaneous and ready way he expresses himself in his letters, it seems clear that the English language, as such, presented difficulties much less formidable than we might imagine, amazing as this is.

There is no doubt, further, that Conrad, even more than most artists, was affected by whether the subject was really congenial

or not. *The Mirror of the Sea* is such a delightful volume because Conrad is so evidently happy in writing of things he knows and loves. Some artists are singularly even in their work. Others vary between wide extremes. Conrad belonged to the latter; and so did Shakespeare, if he really wrote all that is printed over his name.

There is, however, a more important reason why some, even careful, readers do not 'get on' with Conrad. His technique of narration is frequently so complicated and round-about that some people are exasperated thereby. Conrad's mind, and his story, sometimes began at a point in time and space and worked forward in a straight line; and then his narrative is easy enough to follow—witness *The Nigger of the Narcissus* and *Youth*. Most storytellers work forward like this and it is what we, as readers, are all accustomed to. But more often Conrad's mind, and also his narrative, begin at a point but spread outward in circles in all directions; like throwing a stone into a pool. That is to say, he ranges backwards and forwards in time and space without any obvious plan, although in the end everything fits together to complete a picture. The method, indeed, has the advantage that the final effect is more rounded, more solid, than the straightforward narrative would have been. It is indeed more like a piece of sculpture than a picture in the flat. Our own minds and memories function like that; but some people, perhaps those with specially neat and logical minds, find the process maddening when applied to literature, and it has probably lost Conrad many admirers.

It is worth while to examine the two methods a little more in detail.

As example of the former we may conveniently take *The Nigger of the Narcissus*. The ship is lying at Bombay, just about to begin her voyage. We are introduced to Mr. Baker, 'the model mate,' and to the hands; the ship sails, and we follow her adventurous voyage round the Cape till she reaches her destination at the London Docks. Structurally nothing could be simpler, and *The Nigger of the Narcissus* is one of the most beautifully artistic pieces of work in the whole range of English literature.

But there seems little doubt that the other method came more naturally to Conrad, and also that he felt it gave him much greater possibilities. It is well illustrated early in the volume of reminiscences which was eventually published under the title *A Personal Record*. He is discussing how he came to be a writer

and the circumstances in which his first book *Almayer's Folly* was written. At the moment when his reminiscences begin he is in his cabin on the steamer *Adowa*, which is lying alongside the quay at Rouen. He looks out of the port-hole:

'The round opening framed in its brass rim a fragment of the quays, with a row of casks ranged on the frozen ground and the tail-end of a great cart. A red-nosed carter in a blouse and a woollen nightcap leaned against the wheel. An idle, strolling custom-house guard, belted over his blue *capote*, had the air of being depressed by exposure to the weather and the monotony of official existence. The background of grimy houses found a place in the picture framed by my port-hole, across a wide stretch of paved quay, brown with frozen mud. The colouring was sombre, and the most conspicuous feature was a little *café* with curtained windows and a shabby front of white woodwork, corresponding with the squalor of these poorer quarters bordering the river.'

From the cabin of the *Adowa* Conrad then ranges backwards and forwards: how the ship came to be there, how he came to be on the ship, how he had come to begin writing *Almayer*, how he had met the original Almayer in the Malay Archipelago years before, his youth in Poland, how he had conceived the idea of being a sailor, and so on. It is pleasant, natural, reminiscent, go-as-you-please. There is no special order in the narration, but the final result is that we have a very complete and human document, and are left with a feeling of intimacy with the author and the varied circumstances surrounding the writing of his first book. Much more so, perhaps, than if he had begun with his youth and worked forward in sequential order.

That is the method he applies to himself, and he employs it also to delineate the greater characters in his fiction—Lord Jim, Nostromo, Heyst in *Victory*, the old sailor Peyrol in *The Rover*, Captain Mac Whirr in *Typhoon*, a whole host of other mariners, Dona Rita in *The Arrow of Gold*, Flora de Barral and Captain Anthony in *Chance*, and many more besides. In most of his greater stories Conrad combines with adventurous incident a very careful delineation of the chief characters, and this careful delineation generally precedes the main development of the plot. Consequently, when the story does begin to move more quickly, we have an intimate knowledge of the persons with whom we have to deal.

Lord Jim is the most typical example of this. The book falls

roughly into equal halves. During all the first part we are getting to know Jim and what is the matter with him. He has disgraced himself in the eyes of the world, but much more particularly in his own. It is essentially a psychological study. The second part, full of exciting incident, is the story of how he regains his self-respect. This part is essentially a tale of adventure. But the adventure gains immensely in significance and interest because we have learnt to know Jim so well, and the reasons which prompt his later actions. To discuss in detail the advantages and disadvantages of the method is hardly possible here. But at any rate we may note that it requires patience on the part of the reader.

With a small number of notable exceptions, Conrad needs time and a certain leisureliness to develop his theme. This explains why, to speak generally, he is so much greater as novelist than as short-story writer. In this he is the exact reverse of Kipling. Kipling, supreme in the short story, gets his tale going with amazing rapidity, but his characters for the most part remain types. That, however, is of minor importance in Kipling's chosen medium, the short story full of incident. Even Conrad's shorter pieces are seldom very short. Where Kipling has twelve to fifteen in a volume, Conrad has three to six. Some of the most successful, *Freya of the Seven Isles* for instance, are really condensed novels. *Youth* is of the same type exactly as *The Nigger* except that all the descriptions are very much shorter in *Youth*, and the number of characters reduced. Both describe a whole voyage full of incident. I take it that the typical short story of the Kipling variety is the elaboration of only a single incident, and that type Conrad achieves with success only rarely. The example which springs most readily to mind is *The Secret Sharer*, the story of an exciting occurrence which is supposed actually to have occurred on the *Cutty Sark*, one of the well-known tea clippers, when the Captain, for part of the voyage, successfully conceals in his cabin from his own crew a man accused of murder who had taken refuge with him just as the ship was sailing.

If we may revert again for a moment to that glimpse of the Rouen quay through the port-hole of the *Adowa*, we see in it a striking example of the photographic quality of Conrad's memory. A scene so visualised seems to have remained with him for always thereafter. The *Adowa* was at Rouen early in 1894. The Reminiscences appeared fifteen years later. Yet there it all is, the row of casks, the carter's red nose and nightcap, the custom-house

guard with his belt, the little *café*. How many of us can even remember what we saw when we looked out of the window last month?

We are fortunate in the careful work done by Conrad's biographers, Richard Curle and G. Jean Aubry, who, partly with his own assistance, have tracked down most of the major episodes in his books to the corresponding experiences in his own life. It is apparent how very greatly the writer drew on the personal recollections of the man, especially of the mariner. A particular scene, a particular individual impressed itself on his mind's eye, and twenty or thirty years afterwards the picture would come to life as a piece of literature, full of colour and detail.

Looking with fresh minds at Conrad's work as a whole, we see that his achievement is immense. Firstly, he possesses that indefinable quality, *Size*. There is a certain sheer massiveness about Conrad's work in the same way that there is about the sculptures of Michael Angelo or the choral works of Bach. That his work is frequently rugged does not matter any more than it matters with Rodin.

It is impossible to define this quality of size. It marks off the great masters from others who are good artists. As to whether any particular artist has it or not must be entirely a matter of opinion. Some will deny it to Conrad. I submit, with all deference, that four at least of Conrad's novels exhibit this quality in a way in which hardly any other novels written in English during the twentieth century do. They are: *Nostromo*, *Lord Jim*, *Victory* and *The Rescue*. With regard to the first two, one can go even further, in my opinion, and say that in this particular quality of size no other novels yet written in this century come up to them.

I submit next that in this period no other novelist has been equally successful in combining profound study of character with dramatic adventure. Mr. T. S. Eliot in an illuminating essay, *Dickens and Wilkie Collins*, points out that the dramatic novelists of the nineteenth century combined into one book various strands—adventure or even melodrama, character study, low comedy. Shakespeare did the same in his plays. In the twentieth century it is usual for these to be separated and for individual writers to deal with only one at a time. So we have either detective stories and thrillers, or high-brow character studies, or definitely humorous novels. With Conrad we cannot say that either character or action is the more important. He has told us that it is the *motives* of

action which interest him most, and these depend on character. In this way his books are more complete than those of the novelists who specialise in one aspect. And this in spite of the absence of knock-about fun of the Dickens type, though his books are far from lacking in sly humour. There is, however, no comparison between Conrad and Dickens in their fidelity to truth in the matter of character delineation.

Another aspect of Conrad's work is closely connected with the idea of size, and that is the expression of Force. There is a quality about much of his work which can only be expressed by the word 'terrific.' This applies to nearly the whole of *Nostromo*. It is the story of a revolution in a South American republic with a silver-mine in the background, which more and more dominates the fate of the revolution and the destinies and morals of the individuals. To read *Nostromo* is vicariously to live through that revolution, with its hopes and fears, its cruelties and feverish suspense. In comparison, the majority of detective stories and so-called thrillers are the merest milk and water, pap for flappers or bored railway travellers. They are harmless because incredible. But *Nostromo* is utterly credible, and the intensity of its effects is shattering—at least, that is its result on many people. In the last section of the book the storm has subsided and the waters are less troubled, but there are earlier parts to which little in English literature can be compared since Shakespeare's greater tragedies.

Such passages of extreme intensity are not rare in Conrad. The end of *Lord Jim*, the end of *Victory*, the blowing up of the magazine ship in *The Rescue*, the terrific scene in *The Arrow of Gold*, with the armed and raging maniac outside the room where the lovers are together, Willems' death in *An Outcast of the Islands*, these are a few examples which come readily to mind. A splendid one is that thrilling passage in *Chance* where the two sailing ships are in instant danger of collision at night. One has the full force of half a gale behind her, while on the other those on watch suddenly realise that they have not been seen and that in a few moments they will be run down. The first signal splutters and goes out. Then the mate runs down to find and light the flare. But his hands are cold and damp. One match after another goes out. How we curse those matches! At last the flare is lit—just in time. The ship is seen, and the other, a magnificent vision under full sail, goes flying past before the wind. Is there any reader so cold who does not heave a sigh of relief when the tension is at last relaxed?

The atmosphere of glamour which pervades so much of Conrad's descriptive writing has often been discussed. It is less definable than the tension we have just referred to and is all-pervasive in Conrad's work. Many passages have already become classical where this impression of seeing the world through a halo of enchantment is more especially notable. One of the best known occurs near the end of *Youth* where the young second mate wakes up in the life-boat to get his first view of the East.

Conrad would seem not only to have seen the world with a very retentive memory, but also himself to have seen places, people and events with a special zest and wonder. It is his ability to transfer these feelings to paper which lends that peculiar Conradian glamour to his narrative. In his earliest volumes, *Almayer* and *The Outcast*, it is sometimes overdone. The adjectives are piled one on the other in almost embarrassing profusion, just as a young composer, determined to obtain certain effects, might in his earliest compositions overdo the brass or the drums. But Conrad is quickly out of the apprentice stage. His third long tale is that perfect work of art *The Nigger of the Narcissus*. He wrote greater works than this, judged by size, depth and intensity, but surely *The Nigger* for sheer artistry is flawless? And from the beginning to the end its pages seem invested with that intangible glamour which, without for one moment interfering with the reality of their everyday existence, seems to invest sea and sky, ship and men with a kind of ethereal quality, separating them from, and lifting them out of the ordinary scheme of things.

Still more is this the case with *The Rescue*, in this sense the most magical of all Conrad's books. Personal likes and dislikes must inevitably influence opinion, but I cannot help feeling that many critics are inclined to do less than justice to this work compared with some of his others. It has not the intensity of *Nostromo* or *Victory*, nor the profundity of *Lord Jim*, yet it seems to me to excel all his other works in atmosphere. It is the story of a passion rising spontaneously between Tom Lingard, the independent and adventurous commander of a brig, and the wife of a wealthy yachtsman cruising in the Malay Archipelago. The yacht goes aground under circumstances to cause Lingard extreme inconvenience, not to say danger. For he is involved in native plots and politics ashore, and, at a most inauspicious moment, finds himself called upon to assist these strangers. The natural fascination of the tropic seas and coasts are in themselves conducive to

this magical feeling, and Conrad has contrived to weave into this background a spirited story of love and intrigue. It is true that some of the lesser characters are not very decisively drawn and that the plot lacks definiteness, yet the spaciousness of *The Rescue*, and its atmosphere of glamour, make it one of the pleasantest of all Conrad's books to pick up and open anywhere at any time.

This peculiar atmosphere of glamour is not identical with fine writing, though frequently allied with it. For splendour of style no anthology of English prose could now be complete without some passages from Conrad, whatever other modern authors were omitted. For sheer poetic beauty, imagination and the magic of rhythm I cannot myself see that any other modern writer has anything comparable to offer. That this supreme exponent of written English should not have learnt our language until after he was grown up is a miracle which is almost incomprehensible.

He struck this vein of gold at once. Lest it be thought that his greatest powers of descriptive writing were only called forth by winds or weather, let us take as example the description of the slave from *Almayer's Folly*, his first book:

'Taminah walked on, her tray on the head, her eyes fixed on the ground. From the open doors of the houses were heard, as she passed, friendly calls inviting her within for business purposes, but she never heeded them, neglecting her sales in the preoccupation of intense thinking. . . . In that supple figure straight as an arrow, so graceful and free in its walk, behind those soft eyes that spoke of nothing but of unconscious resignation, there slept all feelings and all passions, all hopes and all fears, the curse of life and the consolation of death. And she knew nothing of it all. She lived like the tall palms amongst whom she was passing now, seeking the light, desiring the sunshine, fearing the storm, unconscious of either. The slave had no hope, and knew of no change. She knew of no other sky, no other water, no other forest, no other world, no other life. She had no wish, no hope, no love, no fear except of a blow, and no vivid feeling but that of occasional hunger, which was seldom, for Bulangi was rich and rice was plentiful in the solitary house in his clearing. The absence of pain and hunger was her happiness, and when she felt unhappy she was simply tired, more than usual, after the day's labour. Then in the hot nights of the south-west monsoon she slept dreamlessly under the bright stars on the platform built outside the house and over the river.'

Here we seem to have the result of one of those photographic

images which had left a permanent impression on the writer's mind—a vision seen many years earlier, and very likely only for a fleeting moment. But what he gives us long afterwards is not merely the external picture of that simple slave girl but, in a few lines, her daily life and what she is in herself.

And that gives us the key to Conrad's greatness. It is essentially that of the spirit which can enter into and understand the minds and hearts of others, their joys and fears, and try to penetrate the motives of their thoughts and actions, be they good, bad or indifferent. Jean Aubry has summed it all up in a very fine line at the conclusion of his life of Conrad. I take leave to quote it here. He speaks of him as 'one who was an artist in the great manner, and a man strong in soul.'

Berlin.

THE CHASTENING.

SHE will do anything for me :

So she says. I'll not believe her ;

Those quick lips of hers deceive her.

They so mobile, changeful so,

Steady to one man's mouth to grow ?

Ah, no ;

I would not they should try to be.

Yet still to keep them, even for this,

That when they are tired with kissing,

When they quiver, maybe missing

That repose and quiet reign,

Lost, sold, and craved to have again

In vain,

Mine may come something not amiss.

C. S. SHERRINGTON.

GHOSTS OF OLD PEKING.

BY DANIELE VARÈ.

IN my Life of the Dowager Empress of China, Tzu-hsi,¹ when describing the Boxer rebellion and the siege of the Legations, I lingered over an episode that occurred in the Winter Palace, towards the end of June, 1900. In those days the Boxers were venting their rage on the Chinese converts to Christianity, whom they called the 'devil's disciples,' hunting them down like the Huguenots on the night of St. Bartholomew.

From the moment of their first entry into the Tartar City of Peking, the Boxers had attacked the Chinese Christians who lived round the Catholic church situated near the city gate called the Hata Men. The church and the surrounding houses were set on fire. The Boxers threw their victims into the burning building and pushed them back with their bayonets when they tried to escape. A few days later, many hundred Chinese converts were put to death outside Prince Chuang's palace.

The Emperor Kuang-hsu was suspected of sympathising with the foreigners, and with the 'devil's disciples.' He was Emperor only in name, as the formidable Dowager Empress had seized the reins of power in a *coup d'état*, in 1898. The Boxer chiefs were determined to make their power felt even within the sacred precincts of the Forbidden City. So it happened that, on the 26th of June, a group of sixty Boxers, led by Princes Tuan and Chuang, marched into the palace itself, in search of fresh victims.

When they reached the courtyard on to which opened the Emperor's pavilion, they began shouting for him to come out. It was about six o'clock in the morning, and in the pavilion opposite the Empress Tzu-hsi was having her early tea. She heard the crowd approaching and the shouts of the Boxer soldiery clamouring to kill. Without a moment's hesitation, she went out to meet them, and stood alone, at the top of a flight of steps, her slim figure in its embroidered robes showing in strong relief against the darkness of the doors that were open behind her. By that time the courtyard

¹ *The Last of the Empresses*, and the passing from the Old China to the New. Published in England by John Murray, and in U.S.A. by Doubleday Doran and Co.

was swarming with armed men, filled with the lust of animals who have tasted blood.

The Empress looked down upon them and her steady gaze met that of Prince Tuan, whose jaw dropped and whose knees shook beneath him. He had always been afraid of the Empress. Then she began to speak.

She did not raise her voice; she did not bluster or threaten. Her words betrayed no fear and no anger; only an icy, measureless disdain. She asked if Prince Tuan had come to look upon himself as Emperor: 'If not, how dare he behave in this reckless and insolent manner? She would have him know that she alone had power to create and to depose the Sovereign. If he and his fellow princes thought that, because the state was at a crisis of confusion, they could follow their own inclinations, they would find themselves seriously mistaken. She bade them depart and refrain from ever again entering the palace precincts, except when summoned to her presence on duty. But they would first prostrate themselves and ask His Majesty's pardon for their insolent behaviour. As a slight punishment for their offences, she further commanded that the Princes be mulcted of a year's allowances. As to the Boxer chiefs, who had dared to create this uproar in her hearing, they should be decapitated on the spot.'

At this point she looked round towards her eunuchs, who stood by half-hidden among the lacquer columns. And she signed to them to fetch the guards from the outer gates. The eunuchs dropped on one knee as they received the order and then hurried off on their errand. The Empress turned and passed back through the doors whence she had come. The Princes, who had borne themselves with so much pride a few moments before, slunk away without a word.

Tzu-hsi had quelled a riot, by sheer force of character and by the prestige of her dominant personality. It was no mere bluff that made her speak as she did, and calmly order men to punishment, when any one of them might have felled her to the ground. She never doubted that it was for her to command and that she would be obeyed. China can boast of many great rulers, but none knew better than this Empress how to impose her will. In that brief imperious speech from the courtyard steps there breathed the voice of old Asiatic conquerors: of Gengiz Khan, of Kublai and of Tamerlane.

The danger had been greater than she knew. With the pretext

of seeking out the 'devil's disciples,' Prince Tuan and his followers meant to strike at the Son of Heaven. If they had attained their object, in those days of utter confusion, it would have been easy for armed men, who enjoyed the favour of the populace in their campaign against the foreigner, to have brushed aside the women and the eunuchs and to have seized the throne itself.

If only by reason of the contrast between the spheres in which they moved, the historic figure of the old Empress, quelling by sheer force of will the Boxer chiefs who had burst into the palace, is linked in my mind with the figure of another woman, who in those same days in Peking gave also proof of an unconscious heroism. And if, as the Chinese believe, the Tartar City has its ghosts, that come back to haunt the places they frequented on earth, then the two shades may meet, and perhaps understand one another, as in life they never could have done.

When my *Life of the Empress Tzu-hsi* was first published, there was still living in Peking a little Italian nun, Suor Vincenza, who had been in China more than forty years. Up till the day of her death, a short time ago, she was one of the few people still residing in Peking who remembered the Boxer rebellion. And whereas serious students of Chinese history will enumerate a whole series of psychological and economic reasons for that outbreak, Suor Vincenza had a more simple explanation. According to her, all the trouble was really nothing more than a contemporary manifestation of the ancient feud between St. Michael and the Devil. She told me her own experiences many times, and her narrative revealed the depth of her own religious faith, her courage, her kindness of heart, as well as a characteristic Neapolitan humour, that in her went hand-in-hand with the Christian virtues.

Now that she is dead and gone, I can write more freely of Suor Vincenza. Some of her remarks, had they been repeated when she was alive, might have got her into trouble. For the very sincerity of her faith made her speak of the Deity with a familiarity that fairly took one's breath away. From her conversation you would have thought that '*le bon Dieu*' (she spoke to me in French as often as in Italian) was somewhere in the back premises, and that He and she did not always see eye to eye on things in general.

I used to drop in often to see her in the little chemist's shop attached to the French hospital, and I remember once going in to condole with her after the death of a much younger nun, who used to help her in the pharmacy. Suor Vincenza looked at me over the top

of her spectacles, while she made up a prescription, and shook her head dolefully.

'She was a sweet character,' she said, 'and young and clever and pretty. Why could not I have been taken in her place? I am old and ugly and short-sighted. It is really hardly safe to leave me to do the work in the pharmacy. But *le bon Dieu* is like all other men. He likes them young!'

There is a Chinese expression that I always associate with one of Suor Vincenza's remarks. It is *mao ping*. One uses it to describe some porcelain vase, or plate, or cup that has some blemish, some small crack or fracture that diminishes its commercial value. One day, while I was waiting for Suor Vincenza to make me up a mouth-wash (to disinfect my mouth and throat, after going about Peking in a dust storm), a little woman entered from the glass door that opens on to the garden, and disappeared into the back premises. Probably she was on her way to see Doctor Bussi re, primary of the French hospital. By the thick layer of paint on her face and by a certain exaggerated coquetry of her rather tawdry clothes, I guessed she must be an inmate of what we called 'the White House,' an establishment of ill fame, situated on the Austrian glacis.

In response to an enquiring glance from me, Suor Vincenza said:

'Oui. C'est une petite dame de la Maison Blanche. La pauvre ! Elle est un peu *mao ping* !'

One could not have conveyed the idea more kindly, or with more precision.

It was to hear Suor Vincenza talk about Peking that I went so often to the chemist shop. And especially to listen to her experiences in the year of the siege.

In the spring of 1900 Suor Vincenza was looking after the pharmacy of the little mission of Cha-l , outside the walls of Peking, in the direction of the Summer Palace. When the situation began to appear dangerous, the Italian Minister, Marchese Salvago Raggi, advised the French Bishop, Monsignor Favier, to bring Suor Vincenza into the capital. Soon after she was recalled from Cha-l , together with the other nuns and some Marist Fathers. They all took refuge in the mission of the Pei-tang, inside the walls, at a distance of about three miles from the Legations.

Suor Vincenza's narrative begins with a visit which the Marchese Salvago Raggi paid to the French mission, a short time before the

siege began. In those days it was still possible (though dangerous) for foreigners to circulate in Peking. Baron von Ketteler had not yet been murdered.

'One day the Minister came with his secretary, Signor Gaetani [she meant Don Livio Caetani, son of the Duke of Sermoneta and elder brother to Don Gelasio Caetani, who was Italian Ambassador in Washington]. They asked me if there was anything that I wanted. I answered: "A revolver." Then Signor Gaetani gave me his own: a tiny pistol. But I said that I did not know how to use it. He was always so kind: he showed me how. And I fired off one or two shots. The Minister was very nervous. Probably he thought I was more dangerous than the Boxers. Also the Mother Superior seemed anxious and, to avoid accidents, she would not let me keep the pistol.

'Monsignor Favier still went almost daily to the Legations. Thanks to him and to the Ministers, it was decided to send a small detachment of sailors to the Pei-tang. On the first of June Monsignor Jarlin came with the Commandant Henri to look over our house and to choose the best points for the defence. Then they began to build barricades with doors, shutters and tables. They also made some loopholes, to shoot through. On the fifth of June the Italian sailors arrived. The Minister came, that same day, to see them. There were twelve of them. I was so happy because, after eleven years, I found myself once more among my own people. But my heart was sore, not knowing what might happen to all of us. Every night I said my prayers to our own Mother in Heaven, the Madonna of Pompei, and I asked that I might be killed rather than those poor boys!'

Among the political and military alliances that, in the last century or in this, united the armed forces of Italy and of France against a common foe, none marked a happier agreement than the brief alliance between a few French and Italian sailors, each commanded by a very young officer. Suor Vincenza spoke to me mostly about the Italians. But from her narrative (which she repeated to me more than once) there emerges also the figure of the French Lieutenant Henri, a man of serene courage and a fervent Catholic. To him the defence of a sacred edifice against the enemies of Christianity offered all the inspiration of a crusade. His Christian name was Paul. On the festival of St. Peter and St. Paul the Marist Fathers and the nuns expressed to him their best wishes. He thanked them and said:

'I am sure that God will not let me die, as long as I can be of use in defending you.'

These words were sadly prophetic. Lieutenant Henri was killed only when the siege was drawing to an end.

'The Italian Subaltern'—once more I quote Suor Vincenza—'was Signor Olivieri, of Genoa. He was only twenty-two years old, but very serious-minded. All our sailors were much pleased to find two Italian nuns. Besides me, there was Suora Maria Graziani and Suor'Angèle, who was Portuguese. We used to wait on the sailors at table. They had hardly sat down for their first meal when the children cried out: "*Tà tao kwi li-la!*" ("The Boxers are coming quickly"). The officers and the sailors caught up their rifles and ran out. Luckily we followed close on their heels, and Suora Maria called out to them not to shoot. They were not the Boxers, but our own Chinese servants returning home. They came very near being killed! And this happened more than once. A Mandarin, a friend of ours, came to see us. And the sailors caught him and tied him up. And he kept on repeating: "Catholic, Catholic!"'

Suor Vincenza held forth with pride about the fuss and bustle (for which she herself was primarily responsible) on the occasion of the Feast of St. Anthony. And all because she had discovered that Lieutenant Olivieri's father's name was Antonio! She appealed to the Marchese Salvago Raggi, and he sent her two big cakes and two bottles of champagne.

'Signor Olivieri was very grateful for this attention (though he scolded me a little for troubling so many people on his account). Of the two cakes, he gave one to the sailors and one to the nuns, keeping only a small slice for himself. He shared the champagne with the sailors, and they drank to the health of the Minister and the Marchese Salvago, and to that of his own dear father.'

This was the last occasion on which some at least of the refugees at the Pei-tang enjoyed a little treat. Hunger soon made itself felt, as so many Chinese converts begged for protection. As long as there was any room it was not possible to deny them a refuge. Suor Vincenza found it quite natural that the nuns should have less to eat than the others ('You see: we did not fight!'). She told me, as if the fact was really surprising, that she never felt the desire for choice foods, nor even for the familiar dishes of her own country. What she longed for and dreamt of was a big hunk of bread.

'I said to myself: if ever I come out of this furnace, I will take my fill of bread. Only of bread!'

Her favourite story (how many times has she told it to me ?) was that about 'the miracle of the yellow hen.'

'Poor Signor Olivieri was in bed with a quinsy. And one of the Marist Fathers was dying. We had no food that either of them could eat: not a thing! But the divine Providence came to our help. A yellow hen flew over the wall into our garden. The sailors caught it, and we made some chicken broth. With this we fed Signor Olivieri for two days.'

The greatest tragedy was the hunger of the children. Suor Vincenza said that after that experience she never felt young again. Sixty-six babies were entrusted to her care (she would carry them about, six at a time, in an open umbrella), and sixty-six died. No hope of saving even one!

As with the foreigners who were besieged in the Legations, the greatest torment to the refugees in the Pei-tang was the incessant noise of guns and explosions, of drums and gongs and bells. And their greatest cause of anxiety was the constant danger of fire.

During the more intense bombardments Suor Vincenza and the children would seek refuge in the cathedral. She often described to me the horror of those suffocating August nights; the vitiated air inside the sacred edifice, so chock-full of Chinese; the difficulty to find a place where one could lie down and rest one's head. And outside, the downpours of warm rain, alternating with the rain of bullets.

On the 12th of August, when the siege was drawing to its close, came the culminating episode in Suor Vincenza's recollections. As happened round the Legations, so it was at the Pei-tang: there was an intense and continuous underground struggle with mines and countermines. According to Suor Vincenza, five mines were exploded round the Pei-tang. The last one completely demolished the house in which Lieutenant Olivieri was living. This happened in the early morning, about half-past six.

At the moment of the explosion Suor Vincenza was at mass, which Father Girot was celebrating in the open air, on a big terrace. She ran at once to the house which had been destroyed, and feeling sure that Lieutenant Olivieri must be underneath the débris, she called for help in removing the fallen beams and rubbish. But everyone who came to her call pointed out that if somebody really had been buried under that mass of masonry, they must have been killed at once.

This is how Suor Vincenza told the story:

'The Mother Superior said to me : " Dear Suor Vincenza, do not build up false hopes. It is impossible that you should find Signor Olivieri alive. The Madonna will have granted to him the grace of a good death."

'But I answered : " I *will* find him alive. And even if he is dead, the Madonna could resuscitate him."

'And the Mother Superior asked me : " Was he worthy of a miracle ? " But even while she spoke she was doing her best to help me, and so were the Marist Fathers. There was no one else near. They had all gone in search of the Italian sailors, who had been buried under the ruins a little distance off. We worked with difficulty, trying at least to make an opening in the débris, and we shouted with all our might. But all was silence. At last we managed to make an aperture large enough to push in an arm. I did so, but I could touch nothing, and no one answered. So we thought that Signor Olivieri might be elsewhere. One of the Marist Fathers told me that he had seen him in the first hours of the morning. He might be with his sailors. We decided to go and look. In passing we heard the cries of some women who were under the débris of a house near by. One of these was trying to get out, but she could not do so without help. The good Father Superior of the Marists ran to help her, but as he did so a bullet struck him in the chest. He had just time to begin the Act of Contrition. He finished it in Heaven. He was such a good and holy man ! I ran on. But when the French sailors saw me they called out : " Ma sœur ! You are crazy to come here. At least, throw yourself on the ground ! Do you not see that the Boxers are firing on us ? With your white coif, you are an easy mark."

'I was out of my mind with the misery of it all. But I did as they told me, and crouched down on all fours like a dog. So I reached the place where my sailors were. But I could not see them. They were down at the bottom of a ditch and could not move. I asked if Signor Olivieri was there, and Roselli's voice answered : no. Poor Roselli. He said : " I have a beam pressing on my entrails. One arm and both legs are broken. I cannot move. Of the sailors who were with me I know nothing. I call them and they do not answer."

'It was not possible for me to remain there with Roselli. After exploding a mine, the Chinese would fire on the place for an hour or two. I had brought with me a bottle of chartreuse, and I managed to reach down and to give some to Roselli. I told him I would soon

come back. The French sailors succeeded in getting him out, about eleven, when the Boxers had stopped firing for a while.

'I ran back to the house of Signor Olivieri, where I found the five Italian sailors who were still alive. And once more we began to pull away the beams and the rubble and the iron bars. Seventeen big beams had fallen from the floor above. After more than an hour's work, we heard a voice, a groan! What a moment! "He is not dead. He is alive!" we shouted at one another. And at last we managed to uncover him. He was sitting on his bed, with his chin pressed against his knees, because of a heavy beam which weighed down on him. What had saved his life had been the mosquito curtain. The net was wound round his head and kept the dust from his face. But how had he been able to breathe down there, during an hour and a half or two hours?

'His first words were: "And the nuns? Are there any victims among the nuns? And my sailors?"

'We told him that all were safe. He was too weak as yet to be told the truth. The two Bishops came at once to see him and everyone hailed the miracle! As a first restorative I gave him some of the chartreuse that I had given to Roselli. Signor Olivieri had only one small wound on his head, but he was racked with anxiety. The wall which separated us from the Boxers had fallen down, and they could have entered easily. But our Angels kept guard, and every day our Chinese Catholics, with fervent faith, used to sprinkle holy water on the ruins. And the Boxers never entered.'

Rome.

THE SIRENS OF SILVERDAM.

AN INCIDENT OF THE BOER WAR.

BY LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR TOM BRIDGES.

THE moon had set, but the stars were bright and clear and the little column moved steadily forward like a black snake across the grey veldt. The cool night air carried a hint of autumn and there was a fragrance abroad of some aromatic plant bruised beneath the horses' feet, the kind of scent that lingers somewhere in the brain long after sights and sounds have passed into oblivion. Men drew a deeper breath and the horses which had got their second wind sniffed it and sneezed joyously.

Such light-heartedness was an evidence of hard condition, for they had covered a good thirty miles since darkness set in, ambling and scrambling and tripling along at a fair five mile an hour. The night was far spent and already there was the faintest glow in the east heralding the 'Dutchman's Star,' the *voerloper* of the sun, and one thought was uppermost in every mind, not least no doubt in the equine: 'When on earth is that old Scottie going to halt?'

The long war was on the wane and a giant game of hide-and-seek was being played over the whole of South Africa. By day the vast expanse of the High Veldt would be empty save for a few solitary scouts, but by night columns of British and Boers would be hurrying eccentrically about the chess-board in desperate endeavour to outwit one another.

The grizzled Natal farmer who led this particular column had his own methods of protection on the march. He used no scouts, but rode three hundred yards ahead of his regiment, accompanied only by his 'after-rider,' a taciturn Basuto with cat's eyes and a dog's nose. By day Snowball would ride behind his master and aid him with his telescopic eyes, a guttural ejaculation and a pointing of the tongue at the horizon being his method of signalling 'Enemy in sight.' Examination with binoculars would reveal pins' heads moving along a ridge—the heads of men riding behind the skyline. By night his bump of locality was remarkable and

would often bring the column safely to its destination when white guides failed.

Several times they had changed direction in the darkness, but at last the two men came on what they sought: a few scattered thorn bushes which marked a deep donga. There was water at the bottom and with a celerity born of long practice the whole five hundred were soon safely off-saddled and camped twenty feet below the general level of the plain. The cape-carts were somehow lowered down, fires were lighted and coffee made. The order was passed round, 'Column will halt for the day. No fires after daylight.' A few experienced scouts were thrown out to guard against surprise and the Regiment of Very Irregular Light Horse settled down for a well-earned rest.

Riding in with the rear-guard, Lieutenant O'More was quite ready to camp. Five night marches in succession, added to outpost duties by day, were wearying to the flesh. The magic of the starlight and the scented air had ceased to charm and he was smitten with disgust at the monotony of his life. Having seen his troop disposed and his good roan cared for, he flung himself peevishly down with his head on his saddle looking up at the Southern Cross. Three o'clock by that overrated cockeyed constellation! He would have liked to put it up alongside the Great Bear. That *would* be a show up! God! How bored he was! Oh, for a drink! Oh, for a girl! Or even a fight! There had not been a scrap for months, only now and then the mild excitement of scooping up a few lousy prisoners. Oh Hell! Was the rotten war never going to end? For the hundredth time he wished gold had never been found in this god-forsaken wilderness.

So Terence O'More, lately promoted lieutenant and troop-leader. Twice before had he risen to this giddy rank, but each time some untoward incident had unseated him. The last time it was drink. That was at Ventersdorp. The time before it was drink at Potchefstroom. It must here be confessed that Terence could not hold his liquor. A wild medical student straight from Dublin, caught up in the war, his idea of a Great Time was inseparable from whisky and his total inability to hold it like an officer and a gentleman led to disastrous collisions with his dour and puritanical colonel. Sober, he was Nature's complete gentleman and a gallant soldier. Drunk, he slipped back a century and became an Irish patriot of the most sentimental and bellicose kind—in other words, a public nuisance. He would raise the keen for

hours over the ancient woes of Ireland and wake the camp by singing at the top of a stentorian voice, 'Who fears to speak of '98' or 'They're hanging men and women for the Wearing of the Green.' Or he would offer to fight 'any bloody English tyrant,' and call everyone a coward from the colonel down. Being as strong as a bull and one of the best Rugby forwards that ever took the field for Ireland, he was not easily subdued. But beyond these occasional outbreaks he was so doughty a fighter and such a general favourite that his lapses were wont to receive special treatment.

Coming out of the darkness, a man sat down, bushmanlike on his haunches, beside him.

'Hello, Dirck!' he said.

'Hello!' responded the other. 'Got a light?'

Terence produced matches, shaking the box to make sure there were matches inside. The other in his turn shook the box, lit his pipe, shook the box to show he had left some, returned the box to the owner, who shook it to make sure before returning it to his pocket. This ritual of the frontiersman completed and Dirck's big pipe alight, the silence was broken.

'Any news?' asked Terence.

'None,' said the other, 'except that old Scottie is ahead of the clock and we wait here for twenty-four hours to let the other columns get into position. Then we join hands and drive south.'

'God be praised for a rest,' exclaimed Terence. 'Any dorps about?'

'Not for a hundred miles,' said the other, 'but I used to know a farm called "Silverdam" which must be about eight miles away to the east and can't have been visited for a long time. No column has been up in this corner for a year.'

'Go and tell the old man,' said Terence, 'and ask him to let us go there to-morrow.'

Dirck Brand was thoughtful. He was a young Afrikaner lawyer practising in Johannesburg who had at the beginning of the war fought for the Boers and was now doing his best to end hostilities by performing the duties of guide and intelligence officer to the British. He had taken the oath of allegiance and was enrolled as a National Scout.

'I've got to be careful,' he said. 'If the Burghers catch me I shall be put up against the wall pretty quick.'

'We could take a patrol,' said Terence.

So it was agreed, and after drinking the excellent coffee which Dirck's Hottentot boy, Emilius, had prepared, they rolled up in their blankets and slept.

Morning light revealed a natural basin where the knee-haltered horses could roam in safety, protected by a few guards posted on the low ridges which almost surrounded it. It was an ideal spot for a day's halt and dispositions were made to give men and animals as much rest as possible in view of the strenuous operation in prospect for the morrow.

Colonel Macpherson doubted whether Dirck would find anything at the farm. It had probably been gone through and burnt and the people evacuated long ago. However, he gave him leave to take a few men and visit it.

Waiting until noon to give their horses a good rest and a feed, Dirck and Terence set out with an escort of half a dozen men under Troop-Sergeant Waby, a long-legged Queenslander. After an hour's ride to the east, Waby, who with another man was riding half a mile ahead, scrutinising the country from each rise before advancing across the open, sent his mate back to say the farm was in sight and inhabited. He was shortly seen to signal 'all clear' and the party joined him on an iron-stone *kopje* that overlooked the place. They took a careful survey of the farm through their binoculars, but could see no one about except a woman who occasionally appeared on the *stoep* and what seemed to be a Kaffir boy and some chickens. The party waited behind the ridge while Waby with his peculiar stock-rider's swing in the saddle loped down to investigate. He was seen to parley with two women in front of the house and then to wave with his hat for them to come on.

The farm was pleasantly situated by a dam and had a clump of willows, a row of eucalypti and a few pepper trees to give it shade. The surroundings were overgrown and neglected, but the old house itself appeared to be clean and tidy. It was solidly built of stone in the Dutch Renaissance style and was long and roomy and had evidently been added to several times; in fact the interior was a rabbit-warren of rooms.

The two girls who received them on the *stoep* were of very different types. The one who introduced herself as Katje De Villiers was slight and dark with a high colour and a bright eye. Her vivacity betokened her Huguenot stock. The other, Sannie Seepers, was the real Boer peasant, a strapping fair girl of about eighteen with pale-blue eyes, a broad good-humoured face and fine

teeth. Her hair was braided in two long flaxen plaits which made Terence think involuntarily of Brünhilde. Her great arms were bare and showed unusual strength; she could indeed lift a two-hundred-pound sack of mealies on to her back and carry it off. She wore a blue overall and white sunbonnet, while her cousin, Katje, who did the honours, was dressed in a tidy black frock with white frilling at the neck and wrists, no doubt hastily donned on the approach of strangers. The male of the party was a half-witted 'beivoner' or poor relation, a lad of about seventeen left behind as useless for military purposes. He was introduced as Piet and stood hat in hand on one leg, scratching with the other. Terence and Dirck were invited into the shade of the verandah and a Kaffir brought out so-called coffee and *kekjes*, or home-made biscuits.

Terence had taken military precautions against surprise and his scouts had pushed well out from the farm in each direction to points where a good view could be obtained. There did not seem to be any signs of the enemy, though Sergeant Waby, leading the horses into the stone corral, noticed traces of recent equine occupation which he reported to Dirck.

'Yes,' replied Katje on interrogation. 'There were three Boers here passing through to the Bush Veldt a few days ago. No one we knew.'

Except for two Kaffir girls the only other occupant of the farm was Tantje Rosalba, Sannie's mother, who was in bed expecting a child.

'I should like to speak to her,' said Brand.

'You cannot possibly,' said Sannie; 'she is too ill.'

But Brand insisted that his duty bade him view the lady and in spite of Terence's chivalrous protests opened the door of a stuffy bedroom and peeped in, to be rewarded by the sight of a massive figure lying in the great family bed muffled in the bedclothes and surmounted by a mauve sunbonnet. Two sepulchral groans followed him from the room.

'Why don't you have a doctor?' he asked Sannie.

'It is difficult,' said the girl, shrugging her broad shoulders. 'Mama does not want to be evacuated to a concentration camp where women and children are dying like flies. She says she would rather die here and no doctor would come here, it is too far. But she is always having children and will never have the doctor.'

'Where are all the children?' asked Dirck.

'Four are there,' said Sannie, pointing to a little graveyard under the shade of the eucalypti. 'Two are on commando, one was killed at Elandslaagte in Natal and one is a prisoner in St. Helena. My two other sisters are married in the Cape Colony.'

'What a dispersion,' thought Brand.

'Here before the war,' went on the girl, 'we lived twenty or thirty in two or three families, but now all are gone and the house, as you see, except for this part is empty and shut up. There is nothing in it but a little furniture.'

They returned to the living-room where Terence was applying his blarney to Katje with some effect. The room was garishly but comfortably furnished. There was a piano that had not been tuned since the outbreak of the war and on the whitewashed walls were enlarged photos of the more important members of the family. Looking at these forbidding personalities Dirck suddenly exclaimed: 'Surely that is Christian Brand?'

'Yes,' said Katje, 'do you know him?'

'Of course,' said Dirck; 'he is my uncle.' He stopped abruptly, wishing he had not spoken.

'Then you are a Boer?' asked Katje.

'I am, though my mother was English,' he replied. 'I fought the British for two years and now I am trying to end the war in the only possible way.'

There was an uncomfortable silence. The girls exchanged a quick glance.

'Are you a Brand from Mooimesjesfontein?' asked Sannie.

'Yes,' said Dirck, 'I was born there, but went to school at Cape Town quite young and then to College and have never been back. The homestead has been entirely destroyed.'

'I know,' said Katje, 'by your new friends the English. Look! You may find your name here.'

She opened the great family Bible which lay on the table. Brand looked with interest. The flyleaves contained a formidable chronicle of full quivers of De Villiers, Brands and Seepers dating from before the Great Trek, and amongst the moderns, sure enough, he found his own name, Dirck Cornelius Brand, born 1870—and those of all his family.

'You see,' said Katje, 'we are cousins. Everyone is related in these parts.'

Dirck studied the pages for some time. There were not only the names but also a summary of what had happened to each

member of the family. Their temporary circumstances, such as 'on Commando,' 'in prison,' 'in Concentration Camp,' 'at St. Helena,' were carefully recorded in pencil; more permanent affairs, such as births, marriages and deaths, in ink. 'Killed in action' was registered in red ink. There were a great many of these. His own name was still followed by the remarks—Cape Town, College; lawyer, Witwatersrand; and then in pencil, 'op Kommando.'

'Katje,' he said, 'you had better not tell your Aunt Rosalba or anyone else who I am.'

Katje nodded.

'I hope,' continued Brand, 'you do not think too badly of me. I am convinced it was the right course to take. You must resign yourselves as I have done to the inevitable. In a very short time the last of the irreconcilable Burghers will be rounded up and this wretched business will be finished. There are many who have done as I in order to hasten the end.'

Katje changed the subject by asking for news of mutual friends and the conversation became general. More coffee was brought and so agreeably did the time pass for the two young men that the sun was low when they rose to take their leave.

Sergeant Waby who had been investigating produced some trusses of oat hay, a good supply of which he had found in the barn. He was attaching them to their saddles.

'That is for our poor cow,' said Sannie.

'There's plenty left,' said Waby. 'Where's the horse?' he asked quickly.

'We have no horse,' said the girls simultaneously.

'That's odd,' said Waby, 'for my Biddy smells horse somewhere.'

At his suggestion, he and Dirck took a walk round the premises. They were accompanied by the girls, who continued to protest that it was waste of time as the house and outhouses were empty. They had finished their examination of all the rooms and were returning to the *stoep* when Waby's Biddy, feeling lonely out in the corral, began to neigh and was answered from somewhere apparently within the house.

'Oho!' said Waby, 'horses in the Boudoir, eh?'

He went back and began knocking on the walls along the passage and soon was rewarded by a startled snort. Evidently a horse, but where was he? Walled up in an inner room without

windows and with a curtain hung to conceal the door, which had also been boarded up! The butt of a rifle speedily released him and brought to light a splendid startled chestnut with a blaze and four white feet, the kind the Dutch call 'Tollfree.' He was in good condition and well shod. His saddle and bridle lay beside him.

'Lucky there's no rifle,' said Brand. 'We would have had to take the people away and burn the place. Whose horse is this?' he asked.

'It is mine,' said Sannie. 'I ride and drive him. We must have something here in case of accidents or illness.'

'We hoped you would not find him,' added Katje. 'You will not surely take him? He is a pet, we have had him from a foal. He is our only means of communication with the world.'

The girls were urgent in their entreaties for the horse to be left with them, but this Brand was unable to grant. To begin with, he said, Waby was already on his back and no Australian was ever known to give up a horse once it was between his legs, and, secondly, orders on the subject were very strict. He would blind his eye to the cow and report that the family was not in a condition to be evacuated and should be allowed to remain where they were. For this concession the girls appeared very grateful. Again they exchanged a surreptitious glance and seemed to become even more friendly. Warm embraces indeed passed between Sannie and Terence, driving the latter, who had not kissed a girl for months, to a state bordering on frenzy. Katje's methods were less crude, but she too, by the look in her dark eyes and the subtle pressure of her hands, gave Dirck to understand how congenial she found his company.

When Waby, still mounted on the 'tollfree,' was leading their horses and his own Biddy up to the *stoep*, Katje said in a low voice, 'Why don't you both slip back alone and see us to-night? It is quite safe. There are no Burghers within thirty miles and we could have coffee and music.'

'Yes, do,' said Sannie. 'I think I can find some old "Cape Smoke,"¹ and we will have lots of fun.'

Terence accepted with alacrity, but the more prudent Brand saw difficulties and dangers.

'Many thanks,' he said, 'but I fear it will not be possible.'

And so they parted the best of friends, and calling in their

¹ Brandy.

scouts, the patrol cantered away over the plain. Before darkness set in they were back in the hidden valley that so unexpectedly held a waspish force of five hundred hard-bitten fighting men. Dirck reported to the Colonel with some reserve that the farm held nothing but one horse which they had confiscated, and a woman too sick to be moved, with two girls, a couple of Kaffirs and a half-wit '*beiwoner*' to look after her.

Neither Dirck nor Terence could keep their minds from dwelling on the charmers of Silverdam. Sitting smoking after their supper, Terence expatiated on the rustic beauties of the encounter to the envy of his listeners. Dirck pulled at his pipe in silence. Before long they turned in and rolled over in their blankets. But Dirck could not sleep. His mind was stirred by Katje's dark beauty and the pressure of her little hand. She was of the same blood and he would have liked to see her again and to clear away any doubts she might feel as to his action in joining the British Forces. Terence was in no better case. He was whipped and tormented by Sannie's warm kisses and the hug of her great arms. Why throw away, he thought, what the Gods offer in this womanless war? Here was a chance that would not occur again. He sat up. The moon was high and the camp quiet. He noticed that his companion was awake.

'Dirck,' he said in a low voice, 'let's go and see those girls.'

Dirck turned round and stretched himself. He welcomed the idea, but he had misgivings as to the advisability of a second visit. The ardent and persuasive Terence set to work to overcome his scruples.

'All right,' he said at length, 'but move quietly.'

It was still only nine o'clock, and at the other end of the bivouac where Headquarters lay, they could see lights as the Colonel and his staff worked out their orders and made preparations for the coming drive. They could be back, thought Brand, soon after midnight and in this free-and-easy formation no questions would be asked.

With the help of Emilius they saddled their horses and led them quietly out at the far side of the donga. Giving their names to the sentry, 'Lieutenant O'More and Brand on special patrol,' and riding wide round the camp so as not to disturb Headquarters, they set their course for Silverdam. They passed the time of night with the outpost on the ridge as they went through and jogged along in silence, enjoying the night air and the feeling of adventure

sharpened by the unauthorised nature of the enterprise and the spice of danger that seasoned it. As they topped the rising ground which hid the farm, they saw a light in the shallow valley before them.

'Someone at home,' said Terence.

'Yes,' said Dirck. 'They are sitting up for us. I suppose it's all right, but Boer girls are pretty slim sometimes.'

'Oh,' said Terence, 'I'd bank on these two. I'll take the fair one, she's more my weight, and anyone can see your cousin is mad about you. We're in luck, Dirck. They're two damned nice girls to find hidden away like roses in the desert and they're just dying to be loved.'

While still two hundred yards away, he gave a reckless 'Whoop!' that brought two female figures out on to the *stoep*, one holding the lamp above her head. They quickly hitched their horses to the post outside the door and were led in and warmly greeted by their hostesses. The girls relieved Terence of his rifle and bandolier which they placed in a corner together with Dirck's belt and revolver, though the latter protested that he was used to carrying it.

'I can't love a man with a gun round his waist,' said Katje.

Terence, knowing the weakness of the Boers, produced from his saddlebags two tins of salmon, some chocolate and a loaf of white bread—all delicacies on the veldt. Coffee and cakes and the bottle of 'Cape Smoke' completed the feast in which the dribbling Piet joined hungrily.

After supper Piet produced an accordion which he played unexpectedly well and all joined in well-known choruses, English and Dutch. Terence no doubt imbibed more than enough of the powerful spirit and in the intervals of song tenderly embraced his innamorata, who responded to his caresses in no unwilling manner. Katje, if less demonstrative, was equally inviting, but Dirck did not feel quite at ease. He went out once to see if the horses were all right and listened to the stillness of the night. Katje followed him and, putting both arms round his neck, gave him a great warm kiss and whispering 'You must stay with me, Dirck. You shan't go away to-night,' brought him back into the living-room.

It was during Terence's soulful rendering of 'Believe me if all these endearing young charms' that Dirck again thought he heard sounds of restlessness on the part of their horses and again went out on to the *stoep* to investigate. Terence also rose from his seat, none too steady, still singing at the top of his fine baritone voice.

But the phrase 'Thou would still be adored as this moment thou art' died abruptly on his lips as he found himself suddenly seized from behind and his arms pinioned in a vice-like grip. He struggled madly, but even a great heave of the shoulders of the best forward in the Irish pack could not shake off his assailant, who he found to his rage and mortification was none other than the amazon Sannie, while Piet, the half-wit, with surprising deftness slipped a noose of ox-hide *reim* round his feet, bound them together and forced him back into his chair.

Terence yelled to Dirck. Too late! As the Afrikander turned quickly round he found himself looking into two brown eyes down the barrel of an English Smith-and-Wesson revolver, and he received a smart command from Katje: '*Hendsop.*' To complete their discomfiture, the door now opened and disclosed an apparition in a long and dingy nightgown surmounted by a mauve sunbonnet—the labouring Tantje Rosalba! Yes! But Tantje Rosalba with a great shaggy beard and a pair of fierce grey eyes alive with hate and an itching finger on the trigger of a Mauser rifle.

God! what fools they'd been! The struggle was soon over. Both men were rapidly and securely bound to chairs with the stout *reims* evidently ready to hand for the purpose. They were set side by side at the table, Sannie lifting her quondam lover, chair and all, as if he had been a baby.

'Be a good boy,' she said breathlessly, giving the outraged Terence a smacking kiss on the cheek. 'Keep quiet and you won't be hurt.'

Terence's reply was unprintable, but it evoked a great gust of laughter from the amazon's deep diaphragm. She then took the hurricane lantern out on to the verandah and swung it to and fro.

'A signal,' said Terence. 'We *are* in the soup.'

Katje, still holding the revolver, pushed the great Bible under Dirck's nose and in a new voice, a voice in which venom had taken the place of honey, said:

'Look! If you had happened to read that before you might not have stayed so long.' Instinctively his eyes searched for his own name. Yes, there it was:

Cornelius Dirck Brand.

But surely something had been added since their visit of the morning? After *op Kommando* was written in ink the word '*Verraaier*' (Traitor), and then in pencil 'Condemned to death.'

Executed 20th March 1901.' The very date! Were these girls going to shoot him in cold blood? But as if reading his thoughts Katje said:

'You will be tried by Field Court Martial. Listen!' And there was triumph in her voice.

The sound of approaching horses and guttural voices outside left no doubt in his mind that they had been completely trapped by the guile of the two ingenuous maidens and again and again Dirck cursed his folly for returning to the farm against his better judgment.

Eight Boers now entered the room, rifles at the ready, and at their head a tall old man with reddish grizzled hair. Yes, it was General Paul Van Wyck, one of the most stubborn leaders left in the field, and with him another, Feld Cornet Lippen, both of whom, with their commandos, it was hoped to find in the net which would be drawn on the morrow.

Hearty greetings and handshakes all round took place, but no notice was taken of the prisoners until the girls had brought the inevitable coffee and they and Tantje Rosalba, who it transpired was Oom Jan, had told their story and been uproariously congratulated with much boisterous laughter and back-slapping on the slimness they had displayed in the capture. The story of how our Sannie had put her arm-lock on the big *rooinek* had to be told and re-told by the dribbling Piet, while the hirsute Oom Jan, still in his sunbonnet and dirty nightgown, described with graphic gusto the aspect of the hold-up when he arrived on the scene on the pre-arranged signal of Katje's cry of 'Hendsop!'

'A pretty tough crowd,' thought Terence. Even the youths had beards. Their clothes were deplorable. Most of them wore ragged coats and patched moleskin trousers. One old dopper sported rusty black broad-cloth and a battered top-hat which, supplemented by a Mauser rifle and two bandoliers, gave him a distinctly church militant appearance. Their foot-wear was mainly worn *veldschoen* of raw-hide except in a few cases where the British ammunition boot had made good the deficiency. But all were well armed and there was about them a look of alertness and physical vigour that caught the eye of a soldier and there was not a man among them but could have been picked to lead a forlorn hope.

Paul Van Wyck placed himself in front of the prisoners and raised his hand for silence. He doffed his tattered slouch hat with its deep crêpe band and began to pray: 'Onzer Vader.' The others uncovered their tousled heads and joined in with deep voices.

The General then sat down and Katje placed the great Book before him. Was it chance, Dirck wondered, that he opened it apparently at random at the Second Book of Kings and began to read in the majestic language of the Dutch Bible :

‘And Joram turned his hands and fled and said to Ahaziah “*There is treachery, O Ahaziah.*”’

Or had she put the long orange ribbon there on purpose ?

The reading over, a summary court martial was held on Dirck Brand. Several Burghers testified to his identity, including one of his own relations. He was asked if he had any defence. In reply he made a statement of the absolute hopelessness of the Boer cause supported by figures of numbers, arms, horses and material, and said that for a year already he had realised that no intervention from without was possible and that he had done all he could to bring about a general surrender of their dwindling forces. Failing that, he and others, an increasing number, who entirely disapproved of the continuance of the war and realised its futility, had gone over to the British to assist them to end a campaign which was now rapidly ruining the whole of South Africa. He maintained that their cause was lost and that those who remained in the field had been deceived by their leaders, the old backwood Boers, by false information into continuing the struggle.

Dirck was on his mettle. It was a reasoned and passionate pleading but seemed more directed towards moving his compatriots to surrender than to saving his own life. They might of course, he said, convict and execute him in this illegal manner, but he warned them by name (saying several of their names distinctly for O’More’s benefit) that the British Commander-in-Chief would hold them guilty of murder and they would certainly be hanged when caught and it could not be long before that happened. If they would all lay down their arms that night and come back with him to the column, they would be doing a greater service to their country and their families than by continuing a hopeless struggle that at best could scarcely last through the coming winter and which could only end one way. He spoke at much length, not only in his effort to convince his compatriots, but also in the hope of possible intervention from the column.

His words seemed to shake some of the younger members of the Court, but when after ten minutes’ guttural discussion the General put the question, all voted the prisoner guilty.

‘There is only one punishment for treachery,’ said the President,

'and that is death. *Stem u saam?*' (Are you all agreed?) He looked up fiercely.

'Ya!' All raised a hand save one—a handsome young Boer in a khaki coat. He was a cousin of Brand's.

'I do not agree,' he said. 'There is much in what he says. We can never win this war and no other nation will intervene.'

'Then leave us,' thundered the old man, 'and go and look after the horses. Send De Water here.'

But De Water was already listening on the *stoep* and came in at once, raising his hand in ready condemnation. General Van Wyck turned and looked at the painted face of the ponderous Dutch clock in the corner.

'Cornelius Dirck Brand,' he said solemnly, 'you will be shot at midnight. And may the Lord have mercy on your soul.'

'Amen,' said the assembly.

'You have twenty minutes to say your prayers. The whole detachment will form the firing party under Feld Cornet Lippen.'

He stood up, put on his hat and lit his great pipe. Turning to Sannie he said:

'You can keep your tame *rooinek* until dawn, then he can walk back and inform his friends of what has happened. Tell him to keep better company in future. Take them away and put them in separate rooms; we have important matters to discuss.'

The helpless prisoners were carried out and put into different rooms and a burgher set on guard over each of them.

'By God, Dirck,' cried Terence who had understood the gist of the trial, 'if they do this, I'll never rest till every one of them has a rope round his neck.'

Dirck did not answer, his heart was too full. He had been trapped through his own folly in gratifying a selfish desire and had only himself to blame. Nor could he help seeing the logic of the old Boer's point of view and he felt no enmity towards him: but to be condemned by his own countrymen and shot by them was a bitter fate.

And here standing on the brink of Eternity, we must leave him and return to the column lying in Rhenoster Vlei.

Sergeant Waby, after the habit of Australian bushmen, slept lightly and rose at intervals to tend his mare Biddy, the apple of his eye, if only to rub her nose, but more frequently to gather her a

few oat straws or the contents of some neglected nosebag, with the consequence that Biddy was wont to maintain her condition when other horses, even those of the officers, wilted away. On this occasion, he was surprised to find two horses in his troop missing and the process of elimination proved them to be those of Terence and Dirck. He went over to where the owners should have been sleeping, but found them gone with their saddles and arms. Now he knew that no man in the troop could go out on duty without his knowledge and suspicion dawned on him.

'Damn' fools,' he said, 'running their bloody heads into a net. I'll bet those Dutchmen ambush them.'

Something had to be done. His Troop Leader, who in any case he looked on as a mere passenger under his special guidance, was missing, so he decided to wake the Squadron Leader. This officer had been in the field with the regiment since the outbreak of war. Although a regular cavalry officer, he had early discovered that the only way to command irregulars was to know more than they did. His name was Marjoribanks, but he was nicknamed Potgieter, which was held to be easier, and Potts for short. Sergeant Waby without ceremony put his hand on the sleeper's arm.

'Hallo!' said Potts. 'What's up now?'

'Cap.,' said Waby, 'there's two men missing in my troop—that Lieutenant O'More and Dirck Brand the Bojer, who's attached. If you haven't sent them out, they're up to some game.'

'Not I!' said Potts, 'no duties found by C. Squadron to-night. Where do you think they've gone?'

Waby told him.

'There's a couple of girls at "Silverdam" they are after. Now I wouldn't give them away, Cap., but see, that place reeks of Bojers and if they haven't been stopping there in the last two days I'll eat my hat. There was a lot more biltong drying and mealie bags around than there should be. And that "tollfree," damned fine horse, shod and all and a good saddle. That wasn't left there for girls to ride. Likely as not they've run their heads into a ruddy hornet's nest by now.'

'What do you think we could do?' said Potts, who had a high opinion of the black-muzzled bushman and never hesitated to seek counsel from anyone he thought worth while.

'Take out the squadron at once and round up the farm. If there's no one there, it won't do any harm; we can halt there and join in the jamboree to-morrow. There's water in the dam. And

I'd send Brand back to Pretoria and get O'More put back in the ranks again—he's safer there. But I think we'll either find Bojers there or that they've got our two chaps and gone. I didn't like the look of that dark Jezebel, wouldn't trust her as far as I can throw a steer.'

Telling Waby to warn the other Troop Leaders to stand by, Potts hurried round to the Colonel and told him enough of the story to get his acquiescence. While thoroughly annoyed at the conduct of the truants, Colonel Macpherson saw a chance of making a capture.

'And listen, Marjoribanks,' he said. 'You know as well as I do, it's no good just riding into a farmhouse full of Boers. They're pretty cunning. The horses will give the alarm and they'll ride out as you ride in. You'll have to surround the place quietly, wide out, leave your horses and march in from all sides on foot. You can take the scout troop too. Give Dermot the far side and tell Francis and his boys to get hold of the Dutchmen's horses before the alarm is given. They'll see no one gets out alive.'

The moon was still high and within a quarter of an hour the scouts were already trailing out of the camp, in twos and threes according to their wont, followed by the more orderly squadron, while ahead galloped Sergeant Waby accompanied by the redoubtable frontiersman Dinwiddie and the lynx-eyed Snowball. Halting on the ridge, they sent the Basuto down on foot to investigate. He was soon back with his eyes goggling with excitement. 'Mabouna!' he said. 'Maybe a dozen. In the house and on the *stoep*. Horses in the corral.' Dermot jumped on his horse and rode back to warn Potts of the state of affairs. A hasty conference of officers was held and the Squadron Leader gave his orders for the surrounding of the farm. The flank detachments were to take no risks but were to ride in a two-mile circle until they met on the far side, then all would close in on the farm, dismounting at a thousand yards, and at 11.45 p.m. would march in on foot without noise. At the same hour half a dozen picked men, white and black, under Francis, a professional big-game hunter, would crawl up and occupy the corral to make sure the Boers could not get to their horses.

And so it transpired that when the ancient Dutch clock in the corner of the living-room struck midnight and the Burghers broke up their council of war and went to release Dirck from his chair and

bring him out for execution, a ring of Light Horsemen was already closing stealthily in on Silverdam from all sides. Panther-like, Francis the Hunter and his boys writhed their way along the edge of the dam into the walled enclosure amongst the horses, which had now been left unguarded as every member of the Boer party wanted to join in the discussion in the parlour.

The first alarm was given by the horses themselves, snorting at the influx of strangers. A Boer came out on the *stoep*.

'*Wer da ?*' he asked, and receiving no answer, walked up to the corral.

Francis, standing motionless, his head indistinguishable from the rough boulders of the wall, had him covered from the first. He let him come within ten yards, before saying in a low voice :

'Hands up ! You are surrounded.'

But the Boer yelled out, '*Pasop !* (Look out !), the *Rooineks !*' and rushed at him, crumpling up as Francis's deadly aim took effect.

Shouts and oaths issued from the house as the Boers seized their rifles and ran out to get their horses, only to be met with cries of 'Hands up !' and a volley from the wall of the enclosure. Foiled in this direction, they turned back to the cover of the house and hastily decided to work round the corral and take it from both sides.

But Francis's first shot had been the signal for the surrounding Light Horse troopers to come on at the double and the blowing of a whistle behind them and shouts of 'Hands up !' from every direction showed the Boers that their plight was desperate. Several of the younger members made a dash for liberty but ran straight into the cordon, whilst their elders who tried to defend the farm were little better off and after a few minutes ceased firing and surrendered.

Thanks to the darkness the one Boer shot by Francis had been the only casualty and he, by the irony of fate, was Dirk's cousin, Edgar Brand, who had refused to vote the death sentence and had been ordered out to guard the horses. There were only eight prisoners, but amongst them were notabilities no less than General Paul Van Wyck and Feld Cornets Lippen and La Grange for whose special benefit the drive of ten thousand horsemen had been organised for the morrow, whilst amongst the rest were several recognised desperadoes whom Lord Kitchener would be delighted to welcome under lock and key.

The good news was sent back to Colonel Macpherson and the

squadron camped on the scene of victory. A searching investigation of the farm revealed a cache of rifles and ammunition under the floor-boards beneath the great family bed in which Tantje Rosalba had so recently lain in mock travail, and as the place had been used as a *dépôt* of arms as well as an ambuscade, Colonel Macpherson gave orders for the inhabitants to be evacuated to the nearest concentration camp and the farm to be destroyed.

So next morning saw Katje and Sannie, two crestfallen and sullen conspirators, with the blubbing Piet and two Kaffir girls packed off in a mule waggon with their goods and chattels for Middelburg in charge of Sergeant Waby and a few troopers. Potts took leave of the ladies with every courtesy and waited until the cortège was out of sight over the skyline, before giving orders to set fire to the farm.

But the man from Warrego River, suffering the pangs of two years' exile, felt no such consideration for their feelings, and after marching for five miles, halted his charge on some rising ground, and turning in his saddle on the 'tollfree' thrust out his lean jaw at Katje, and pointing back over his shoulder with his thumb said :
'Better take a last look at the old shack.'

The two girls turned round on the waggon-seat and surveyed the familiar landscape of their childhood. There stretched the rolling dun-coloured plain sown with occasional hog-backed iron-stone *koppies* and there in the distance rose the sharp silhouette of the Magaliesburg Mountains cut as it were out of pale purple velvet. But looking back down the ribbon of track by which they had come, a long accusing finger of black smoke pointed upwards to the cloudless sky. It was the home of their fathers.

The yellow dog which had been following the waggon now raised his nose to heaven and gave vent to one long, lugubrious howl. As at a given signal Sannie burst into a storm of weeping and sobbing in which she was vociferously joined by the emotional Piet and the Kaffir girls.

'*Arme ek ! Arme ek !*' she wailed, and rocked her great body to and fro on the seat of the waggon.

But little Katje beside her sat gazing down the track, white-faced and still, her dark eyes smouldering with a bitter hatred that would last for generations.

BRET HARTE.

A CENTENARY PORTRAIT.

BY GEOFFREY BRET HARTE.

IN the quiet country churchyard of Frimley in Surrey, a famous American lies buried. This year marks the centenary of the birth of Bret Harte, who has left not only to American literature but to the literature of the world an imperishable legacy.

To him California owes the immortalisation of its most romantic epoch, the pioneer days of the great gold rush of 1849 which drew from all parts of the earth, and from all strata of human society, men bound by the common quest for wealth and adventure.

From the lawless mining camps in their magnificent, rugged setting to the peace of his last resting-place in England is a long road for a man to travel, and the story of his rise to fame and its consequences is an interesting one.

Although there is, to-day, no better-known name than his in California, where a whole territory has come to be called the 'Bret Harte Country,' my grandfather was not a Westerner. Born in Albany, in the State of New York, in 1836 of a long line of English and Dutch settlers, he went out to California at the age of seventeen, in the company of his younger sister to join their mother who had remarried and settled in San Francisco. Among all those whom the fabulous, newly discovered West drew to the Pacific coast in those feverish years, none could have appeared less cut out for the rôle of rugged pioneer than this slender rather delicate youth, and there was nothing to indicate that he would one day draw out of it riches far more enduring than the ore of its waters.

Yet if childhood environment and inclinations were any indication of his future, there could be little doubt of the path that lay before him. His father, a professor of Greek, possessed a library rich in history, philosophy and literature, and at the precocious age of six, he had begun to read Shakespeare and Dickens. He was eleven when, unknown to his parents, his first poem was published. It was not, however, until he was twenty-one, four years after his arrival in California, that he wrote in his diary

the memorable words which constituted his real dedication to literature.

'In these 365 days, I have again put forth a feeble essay towards fame and perhaps fortune. I have tried literature albeit in a humble way—successfully—I have written some poetry: passable, and some prose (good) which have been published. The conclusion forced upon me by observation and not by vain enthusiasm that I am fit for nothing else—must impel me to seek distinction and fortune in literature. Perhaps I may succeed—if not I can at least make a trial. Therefore I consecrate this year or as much of it as God may grant for my service to honest, heartfelt, sincere labour and devotion to this occupation.—God help me—may I succeed.'

Little did my grandfather know how prophetic were these words, or how soon this wish was to be fulfilled, beyond his most audacious hope. Meanwhile, in his early years, he tried his hand at a variety of trades, each of which provided him with invaluable material for his future work. He was, in turn, apothecary's clerk, school teacher and printer's devil, and for a time, armed guard on the celebrated Wells-Fargo express coach which transported the newly mined gold from the camps to the city. This was a journey frequently interrupted by highwaymen; his predecessor was shot through the arm and his successor killed.

He did not lack physical courage and he lacked even less the courage of his opinions, although they were more than once to be the cause of grave personal danger. While editor of a small frontier town paper, he had not hesitated to denounce in print the brutal massacre of Red Indians, men, women and children, by the white population, although he knew that this action would cost him his position and possibly his life. As his most recent biographer, Stewart, wrote, 'men fresh from the blood of women and children would not hesitate over lynching and shooting down an impudent cub of an editor who dared to oppose them' and, the ink still wet upon the bold headlines of his paper, he had sat with two loaded revolvers upon his desk waiting for the infuriated mob to break in, and was saved from death only by the intervention of State troops. All his life, he was to voice a fierce hatred of injustice, intolerance and racial oppression through his pen.

At the age of twenty-seven, my grandfather had become editor of a San Franciscan paper of famous literary memory: *The Californian*, to which a coterie of writers with brilliant futures con-

tributed. Foremost among these was Mark Twain, who, in later years, paid to my grandfather a magnificent tribute when he wrote that he 'trimmed and trained and schooled me patiently until he changed me from an awkward utterer of coarse grotesqueness to a writer of paragraphs and chapters that have found favour in the eyes of the very decentest people in the land.'

In 1868, when editor of the newly founded *Overland Monthly*, Bret Harte saw the fulfilment of the wish expressed in his diary eleven years before. He was just thirty-two when 'The Luck of Roaring Camp' brought him sudden fame. This story, followed by 'The Outcasts of Poker Flat,' travelled far beyond the boundaries of California. They brought flattering offers from Boston, the centre of literary America, and crossing the ocean came into the hands of the man whose work he most admired, Charles Dickens. Forster's biography of Dickens tells of the deep impression these stories made upon him; of 'the painting in all respects masterly' and how 'honestly moved' he had been. Dickens at once wrote to the young American author in California, inviting him to come to England and to contribute to *The All Year Round*.

It was a strange link, this reciprocal admiration of a great writer at the end of his career and one whose star was rising, a link all the stranger since neither of them was aware of it at the time. Before this letter reached its destination, Dickens had been laid to rest in Westminster Abbey, and my grandfather, unaware that he had written to him or ever read these stories, held up the *Overland Monthly* to include as a final tribute what is said to be his finest poem: 'Dickens in Camp.'

Fortune had singled him out for special favour and everything he wrote added to his reputation. His stories had brought him literary distinction, but it was a poem that won for him a popularity amounting to national celebrity. 'Plain Language from Truthful James,' best known as 'The Heathen Chinees,' had a reception unparalleled in American literature. To-day, few verses are better known in the English language than the opening lines of this poem:

'Which I wish to remark
And my language is plain
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,
The Heathen Chinees is peculiar,
Which the same I would rise to explain.'

The enthusiastic reception of this poem did not please him. What had been intended as good-natured irony, written for his own amusement, soon served to heap ridicule upon the Chinese population in America, the very kind of injustice he had so often fought against. Not only did he bitterly regret having written it, but in later years he did not like to speak of it or to hear of its fame.

In 1871, tempted by the repeated offers from Boston and New York, my grandfather decided to leave California and return to the East. Seventeen years before he had arrived in California as an unknown lad, and now he was leaving as its most distinguished citizen.

The reception accorded my grandfather during this three-thousand-mile journey across the American continent seems in retrospect almost unbelievable. 'Almost as many towns as wrangled over the honour of having given birth to Homer have striven to tempt Mr. Harte to abide with them,' one paper wrote. Howells, who first entertained him in Boston, spoke of his 'princely progress,' while a great English daily humorously summed up the situation when it wrote :

'The East and the West contend for the reflected rays of his celebrity ; cities dispute for the honour of his presence ; Chicago beguiles him from San Francisco ; New York snatches him from Chicago, and Boston plots deeply his abduction from New York. His slightest movement is chronicled in every paper and where he stops for a few days, a kind of "Bret Harte circular" appears in the press.'

Finally at Cambridge, outside of Boston, America's foremost intellectuals, Emerson, Lowell, Longfellow and a host of lesser lights, entertained him, while the *Atlantic Monthly*, which had first heralded his rise to fame, followed it with a magnificent offer for twelve contributions within the year, an offer said to be the highest ever made of its kind.

If this was success in life, he had certainly achieved it, and there was nothing to indicate the long and tragic struggle ahead. At this critical moment in my grandfather's career, there is little doubt that, had his family life been a different one, the course of his future would also have been different. The lack of home life and domestic unity, of sympathy and understanding, things of which he stood by temperament deeply in need, was to be the cause of great unhappiness and loneliness in these as in later years.

Furthermore, very heavy claims were being made upon his earning capacity which in time crippled him financially.

Already, a year after his arrival in the East, my grandfather was forced to take up lecturing in addition to his literary work. This was to him the most difficult and odious method of making money, even though it proved extremely profitable. Genial in the company of friends, he was shy and ill at ease before an audience, with results that are easy to imagine when faced with new audiences that had to be won over nightly. These tours lasted three years and covered a good part of America as well as Canada. The letters to my grandmother of this period reveal the immense strain which they imposed upon him mentally and physically. The picturesque uncertainty of travel, by which he was never able to count upon reaching his destination, did not add to his peace of mind. 'At Toronto,' he wrote, 'the audience waited for me an hour and a half, as I flew towards them in a special train . . . which I had telegraphed ahead for, and in which I dressed myself at the rate of seventy miles an hour—the most rapid and unsatisfactory toilet I ever made.' Another time, the train having broken down 'as usual' fifteen miles from his appointment, and on the bleak edge of a prairie, he hired a horse, and strapping his blanket and lecture to his back, covered the distance in time.

The strain of overwork and deep personal worries sapped his creative energies as well as his strength, and six years after his arrival from California, his health broke down and he was unable to write.

Diplomatic and consular posts abroad were at this time occasionally awarded to distinguished men of letters in public recognition of their services, and influential friends in government circles urged him to accept one. Interviews with the President of the United States and the Secretary of State resulted in two widely different offers being made him. One was the post of First Secretary to the Legation in St. Petersburg, the other, a post without glamour but offering a considerably increased salary, consul in Crefeld, Germany. This latter offered him a complete change, a chance to regain his lost health and absence from financial worry until he would be able to write again.

In 1878 he sailed for Europe, little realising that he would never see America again. He was, at forty-two, a sick and discouraged man. In contrast to his previous journey across the continent, his passage to Europe was unheralded. Had he known

of the welcome awaiting him, especially in England, he would have been greatly surprised.

Up to this time, my grandfather's knowledge of England had been derived from history and the great masters of her literature. Even in after years, when he knew the countryside well and loved it for its beauty, he continued to associate it with these memories. 'The run up, by rail, from Plymouth through southern and woodland England was so beautiful that it half-atoned for the voyage,' but London, where he stopped for a few days on his way to Crefeld, 'this great, solid, earthly, powerful and practical London' filled him only with an overpowering loneliness. He knew nobody, and nobody was aware of his existence. At that moment it would not have seemed possible to him that England would be his future home; that he would come to be welcomed as few Americans had ever been; that he would hold for the rest of his life an honoured and privileged position here.

His work had given him an international reputation, and had been widely translated. In Germany, Gabriel Conroy had become a best-seller; in England, Dickens had not been the only one to recognise his talent.

He had only had time to arrive in Crefeld when, from his old friend, James Anthony Froude, the historian, whom he had known in America, he received his first invitation, and returned to England no longer as a stranger.

'Imagine, if you can, something between "Locksley Hall" and the "high wall garden" where Maud used to walk, and you have some idea of this graceful English home. I look from my window down upon exquisite lawns and terraces all sloping towards the sea-wall. . . . I walk in the long high garden past walls hanging with peaches and fruits . . . looking over the ruins of an old feudal castle, and I can scarcely believe I am not reading an English novel or that I am not myself a wandering ghost.'

In this same letter to my grandmother, he spoke of Froude.

'I love him more than I ever did in America. He is great, honest, manly—democratic in the best sense of the word—scorning all sycophancy and manners, yet accepting all that is round him, yet more proud of his literary profession than of his kinship with these people whom he quietly controls.'

Froude spread the news of his arrival, and his friendship was

the key to British hospitality. At Newstead Abbey, the home of Byron, the Webbs received him with open arms. They styled themselves his 'English first-cousins' and insisted that he consider Newstead as his 'English home.' At the neighbouring estate, Bestwood Lodge, the Duke and Duchess of St. Albans showed him similar hospitality. This was the beginning of life—long friendships, and in the next twenty-two years his visits here were to be very frequent. 'I have heard much of English hospitality,' he wrote in another letter, 'but never was so pleasantly convinced of it.' Newstead Abbey, through its association with Byron, was of particular interest to him, and there are vivid descriptions of the place in his correspondence.

'To be *here*, where *he* played as a boy, and know how dreadful it must have been for him to part with it; to see the great house of "Annesley" and even the "antique oratory" where he stood with Mary Chaworth, and feel in some queer way *why* he was unappreciated here . . . to come back to the abbey and at night hear the wind sighing through the ruined central window of the chapel . . . or to come up . . . through the old cloisters, when the light of your bedroom candle is but a foot from you, and from every arch the figure of the "black friar" seems to steal forth—then you begin to understand something about this proud, handsome, sensitive, lame boy.'

Among England's literary contemporaries, George Eliot most interested him. 'I was very pleasantly disappointed in her appearance, having heard so much of the plainness of her features.' Her face expressed 'elevation of thought, kindness, power and humour.' Her conversation delighted him. 'It was like her books . . . but I think kinder and less hard than some of her satire.'

After private hospitality came public recognition. The year after his arrival in Europe, he was asked to reply to the Toast to Literature at the Royal Academy dinner, an honour rarely extended to a foreigner, and, having been unable to accept, it was offered to him again the following year. In the presence of the Prince of Wales and other members of the Royal family, the Prime Minister and other ministers of the government, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Lord Chief Justice, and the ambassadors of most of the foreign Powers, Sir Frederick Leighton, the president of the Academy, introduced and welcomed him in a most friendly and flattering speech, after which my grandfather made his address.

This same year he was transferred and promoted from Crefeld

to consul at Glasgow. The *Daily Telegraph* devoted an editorial of welcome and his English friends wrote: 'You now belong to us.' My grandfather had asked for this transfer on account of his health. His sickness had been greatly aggravated by the climate of Crefeld. Glasgow, he soon discovered to his dismay, possessed an even worse one. While in Germany, he had managed to write a few stories, often in considerable pain, but for the first two years of office in Glasgow he was almost a complete invalid. It was not until 1883, after almost a decade of literary inactivity, that he began to write seriously again.

Loneliness and absence of home life added much to the depression of the years in Glasgow. Repeatedly, he had hoped that his family would come over to settle in Scotland or England, but the only thing that materialised was a two-months' visit from his second son, my father. Three years later, through a change in the Administration, what he most feared came to pass. Together with other holders of diplomatic and consular appointments, he received notification of his removal from office.

My grandfather now entered upon the most difficult part of his career. He was nearing fifty and faced the world without other resources than his pen to support his family, and he no longer possessed the vitality and strength of youth. Not without bitterness he had to realise the economic impossibility of returning to America, for while everything he wrote was held at a premium in England and all over Europe, his own country, which had boosted his fame, had apparently lost interest in him now that he left its shores.

With great courage, for he was at this time already almost an invalid, he set out on the last lap of his life, to meet his difficulties squarely. He was determined that my grandmother in America should not suffer from his changed fortunes, and although his children were now grown up and his two sons making their own way, he did not curtail his regular remittances. Up till then he had turned over to her his full consular salary, and he had to make up this amount and make enough for his own needs as well.

To do this, he had to write unceasingly. Immediately after handing over the consulate to his successor, he established himself in London, and through his literary agent, A. P. Watt, who, relieving him of all business connections with publishers and editors, proved of invaluable assistance, he devoted his entire time to work.

No sooner was one story finished than another was begun. Sundays were the same as weekdays, and there were no holidays. Spring, summer, autumn and winter were alike in that, together, they provided three hundred and sixty-five days in which to make up his necessary income.

Unlike some writers, he was a slow and meticulous worker. Every word was weighed before being set down, then often crossed out and rewritten, while, as one of his biographers said, what he threw into the waste-paper basket would have established the fame of another man. One thousand words was the maximum he could accomplish in a day and this often required eight hours of work.

With amazing intellectual vitality my grandfather produced, at this harassed period, work which is considered finer than what he wrote in the hey-day of his fame. 'Heaven help that it may last!' he wrote to my grandmother. 'I have little else to live for now but to leave a name, and I hope a little something tangible to you and the children and I only ask for health and strength to do that.'

He was by no means a recluse and found in social intercourse a relaxation from his day's work. Most of the great historic homes of England were open to him, but when accepting the invitations of his older friends, it was with the understanding that he might devote part of the time to his literary labours. About this time began his close friendship with the late Marquess of Northampton, and several of his stories were written at Compton Wynyates and Castle Ashby.

While he deeply appreciated the welcome extended him in England, my grandfather keenly felt the long separation from his own country. Twenty-two years of residence in the British Isles did not weaken his patriotic feelings, and it was his constant hope that he might one day be able to return there if only on a visit, a hope which was not fulfilled. His compatriots who came abroad merely to cultivate European society, 'title-hunters' of one sort or another, moved him to scathing contempt. 'They think it their first duty to impress Englishmen with the fact that they are still as English as they are, and ignore the fact that a hundred and fifty years of isolation and independence have made us a new and distinct people.'

He was proud of the traditions of his country and felt the need for a greater national tendency in American literature. Few Americans had a deeper knowledge and appreciation of English

literature than he had, but he realised the possibilities offered to American authors of using the characters and background of their own country for their work. No writing was more essentially American than his own.

Holding such views, it was ironical that he should frequently have been the object of slander in the American Press, accusing him, among other things, of being unpatriotic.

Pride and a deep-rooted reticence kept these vexations as well as his personal troubles from the world, and his most intimate friends knew little of his loneliness, the reasons for his unceasing work or the indomitable courage with which he fought sickness and suffering to accomplish it.

The twenty years of separation from the time of my grandfather's departure from America to that of my grandmother's arrival in England shortly before his death, were bridged by a long, intimate correspondence. The children in the early years of this separation held a large place in his mind and heart. Not to see them as they grew up, not to be able to visualise them except with the help of an occasional photograph, to know them only by scant descriptions, was one of his hardest burdens. His elder son he never saw again; his other children he saw again only when he was an old man.

In 1893, my father and mother came to England to settle, and until my grandfather's death nine years later, he was a frequent visitor to our Surrey home. In his rôle of grandfather I have a very vivid recollection of him. I can well remember him playing with my brother, now dead, and myself, with the contents of those mysterious packages which always accompanied his visits. He liked to see us alone and not in the intimidating presence of grown-ups. I can still hear my mother's voice calling from the hall for me to come down, 'Your grandpapa is here'! and remember entering the room where he stood alone in a characteristic position, his hands and back to the fire and his legs apart. He seemed tall although he was not, and very frail which he was. His hair was snow-white, parted in the centre and brushed away from his forehead with beautiful neatness. He was always quietly and immaculately dressed with the one festive touch of a flower in his button-hole.

A great friendship united my grandfather and my mother. At Christmas, which with rare exceptions he spent with us, and on birthdays there were little exchanges of gifts which, on my mother's

side, consisted usually in some of her handiwork. Though these gifts pleased and touched him, he sometimes pretended to be puzzled by their use.

'I hardly know how to thank *her*,' he wrote in a letter to my father, 'for that beautiful nightgown-case, shirt-case, dining-table cover, slipper-case, fancy-waistcoat and pillowslip combined which she sent me . . . and how perfectly scented it was! . . . When I take it in the train with me in my dressing-bag, haggard City men lean their heads out of the window and say to each other, "How beautifully the country smells." When I opened the package here, the roses on the balcony turned pale with envy and withered on their stalks, the jasmine on the porch shut up, and the honeysuckles stopped "suckling."'

His love of flowers led him to travel with a unique piece of luggage. It was a portable, flowering heliotrope, growing in a deep, narrow bed, protected by a wire trellis and provided with a convenient handle. Nobody was allowed to carry it but himself, and at its destination, it lived on his window-sill or writing-table. Our first crop of roses was always sent to my grandfather in London, although they did not always arrive as fresh as they were packed.

'Thank you and your wife so much for your thoughtful offering,' he wrote to my father; 'they (the roses) were compressed so tightly in their narrow box that I had to draw them out with a corkscrew! But that, I suppose, is a particularity of "first roses,"—being shy and reluctant. After I got them fairly together again, with the aid of a spoon and my hatbrush, I put them in a bowl, where they looked very pretty,—exactly like a mint julip!'

His one hobby in the last years of his life was photography, a hobby that was shared by my father and which led to keen rivalry as to who could develop, print and tone the best results. To the daughter of his friend, Edgar Pemberton, he wrote:

'Thank you so much for the small indefinite pictures of me and the huge distinctive one of your father's foot! It may be a foolish human weakness, but I *should* have liked, (as the plates are small) to have had *one* plate all to myself. . . . Do you keep a set of small plates with his foot in the corner—a sort of perpetual reminder—a kind of *ex-pede Herculem*? You know I don't mind, but it must be disconcerting and *ominous* to the average young man whom you take.'

In 1901, after a long period of semi-invalidism, my grandfather's condition took a serious turn for the worse. His throat had been causing him trouble for a long time and the doctors were puzzled. His suffering became acute and his condition gave way to alarming weakness. The doctors ordered, of course, freedom from work and worry—two things from which there was, for him, no escape. Far from decreasing, the spectre of work loomed larger and his failing strength made it more difficult to cope with it. His wife and the greater part of his family were entirely dependent upon what he could still earn by his pen, and if, at times, he was too ill to write, this meant only longer and harder hours later on to catch up with lost time. Only a tremendous effort of will carried him ahead.

Years before, from the Isle of Wight, he had written my grandmother: 'Sick or not, in spirits or out of spirits, I must work and I see no rest ahead.' Now under far graver conditions, he admitted that if for a single day he turned aside from his task, it was with the greatest difficulty that he could take up the thread again. As his suffering increased, he was hardly able to swallow and lived on jellies and soft foods. 'My wretched body is scarcely worth the sum I am spending upon it,' he wrote, but only once, when his condition seemed unendurable, did he express a longing for anything that could give him a day and a night free from pain.

The most famous doctors attended him, but only when it was far too late to operate successfully, did one of them discover that what they had been treating as acute laryngitis was in reality cancer. The end could only be a question of months. My father was present at this consultation, and received the news in private. My grandfather was not told. He did not need to be, for he already knew that he was dying, even though he did not know the cause.

Just before the last Christmas of his life, he received the news of the death of his eldest son whom he had not seen since he left America twenty-four years earlier. Although he usually spent Christmas with us, he was this time too ill, too crushed in spirit to leave his rooms at Lancaster Gate. 'God knows,' he wrote to my grandmother, 'it is a sad Christmas—for you, for both of us. Happy only to the *one who has gone*.'

What energy he could still command had to be devoted to his work, and in these days of acute suffering he wrote some of his best and most humorous stories.

He rallied through the winter and came to us in the spring. From our house, he went to stay with his old friend Madame Van de Velde, only a short distance away. He hoped to write a new story. He began the opening sentence, crossed out and rewrote it, took a fresh sheet and began again. Then he laid down his pen for the last time. Weary in mind and body, he could no longer work.

A few days later, in the evening, as he sat reading, he had a sudden hæmorrhage. He rose, and asking that nobody should assist him, went slowly up the stairs to his room. All his life he had struggled alone, and he wished to die without help. He refused to go to bed and spent his last short moments in prayer. Soon after, there was a second hæmorrhage and the end had come.

Thirty-four years have passed since Bret Harte was laid to rest in Frimley churchyard, and in these years America has honoured his memory and recognised his place among her greatest writers. His grave has been visited by people of many nations and there have been repeated plans for the removal of his ashes to his native country. It is to be hoped that this will never be done and that his resting-place will for always remain undisturbed, in the country which so warmly and hospitably welcomed him.

BIRDS OF AN INDIAN GARDEN.

BY LIEUT.-COLONEL A. H. E. MOSSE, C.I.E.

It was a Garden somewhere in Western India, of no great size, and unpretentious; in the way of flowers it then had little to offer, but it was green. And to be green at the time and place of which I write was, in a garden, beyond all other virtues. That was, at any rate, the opinion of the Lady of the Garden. For the month was May, in a year following a grievous failure of the monsoon rains, and that little plot of real green turf, green trees around it, was, in the midst of the sandy country where my lot was for the moment cast, just the kind of oasis needed to keep mind and soul from becoming as parched as was the body.

May came to an end. June wore on and still the longed-for rains held off: all day long a blazing scorching sun. The rose-trees drooped and fainted; despite frequent watering the grass plot lost its freshness. Alone the gold-mohur-tree continued bravely to put forth its blossoms of scarlet flame. Even the feathered crown of the palm-tree, towering proudly to the sky, bowed before the suffocating dust storms, as a burning south wind hurled the sand of the plains upon the devoted Garden, covering the leaves of the trees with a thick layer of dust beneath which they could scarcely breathe. And then at last the heavens had mercy and the flood-gates opened wide. Once more the sap flowed freely in the trees, their leaves washed clean of the sand that had clogged their pores, while the thirsty earth drank in deep satisfying draughts of the blessed life-giving rain. The Garden was itself again.

The change in a very few days was miraculous, as the whole country round began to show forth the green life which had for so long lain concealed beneath a surface of arid brown. In the Garden itself the roses were among the first to blossom forth in dainty buds of pink and yellow, charming things that somehow always remind me of sweet seventeen in a sun-bonnet. In the centre of the Garden was a trellised arbour with a flagstaff from which the flag of England floated upon the breeze. Over the sides and roof of this arbour grew a creeper whose name I never knew. Very weary of life it had seemed a short week before, but now new

leaves were sprouting and already a score of delicate white flow'rets raised up-turned faces to the sky; insignificant little blossoms enough, but I fancy their message of humble gratitude to the heavens that sent the healing rain reached as far as aught that the gold-mohur's gorgeous blooms could say. Even the purple-magenta blossoms of the bougainvillaea, which under the May sun had been of a crude and staring hue, now, in a setting of fresher green against the restful grey of the monsoon clouds, had taken on a softened expression, and allowed the eye to rest upon them with a pleasure that had never before been theirs to give. And, that the pleasure which the Garden had to bestow should not be for the eye alone, the moon-flower's white purity presently joined with the roses and the more sensuous moghra blossoms in sending a fragrant message far on the evening air.

So much for the Garden itself. It is rather of the Garden's feathered children, rejoicing with the roses in the quickened life around them, that I have to tell. I shall begin with one of the tiniest of them all. By one of the side walks grew a modest little bush with rather large drooping light-green leaves, and in June, perhaps because of its very modesty, to its charge was entrusted an important Secret, and lower than ever drooped the pale leaves in sturdy determination to preserve their trust inviolate. There was need of such determination, for perched upon the summit of the palm hard by was a crow, whose evil eye little escapes, and whose zest for mischief knows no bounds. Had anything gone wrong it would have been a tragedy. For the Secret, sheltered by three hanging leaves, was a fascinating one—a wonderful little tailor-made house, owned by a dainty wee couple of olive-plumaged tailor-folk, and destined for the accommodation of treasures beyond price, a set of tiny speckled eggs of palest blue. Truly the little bush had cause to be proud of the trust confided to its care.

I had been watching the little bird-tailors, and had suspected for some days that there was such a Secret, before I was thought worthy of confidence and permitted to see tiny bits of cotton and fluff being collected in the verandah by the bonny wee seamstress herself. Most Anglo-Indians must know the Tailor-bird, a cheery little person with a longish bill who, clad in a tail-coat of greeny-brown, hops about the potted plants of one's verandah in perky wren-like fashion. His voice, several tones too loud for such a diminutive creature, is as cheery as his manners, while the work-

manlike way in which his wife and he sew together, with bits of cotton, the leaves that support their nest, is one of the wonders of avine architecture.

Another of the children of the Garden, who builds a charming nest hanging from the fork of a branch, was that lovely creature the Indian Oriole. Flashing like a daylight meteor between the trees, the brilliancy of his golden plumage seemed to challenge that of the sun himself. In full view of the verandah, which provided me with a sheltered post of observation, was a palm-tree, the fibre on the trunk of which furnished a building material much in request among the feathered folk, most of whom, with the coming of the rains, were now upon house-keeping intent. One morning I watched a pair of orioles in the palm. The hen bird, in a greenish-yellow dress of more sober tint than her lord's gorgeous vestments, had pulled out a string of fibre in a long loop, but could not get it away; the fact was that, in her position, the loop was too long to be drawn taut, and after a number of unavailing efforts she gave it up and turned her attention to another string. Had a weaver bird been there he could have shown her the solution of the difficulty—to bite through one end of the loop and then to close your wings and drop through the air until the string tightened and broke. The cock bird the while sat on an adjacent branch and looked on, making never an offer to help. He was probably dreaming of the hairy caterpillars in which, abhorred though they be by other birds, his soul delights. In any case, as an oriental, he was doubtless a believer in the maxim 'Let the women do the work'! No fear of a woman's suffrage question in that community.

In the spring a young bird's fancy— In the Garden all the world was mating. A trio of Bulbuls afforded me a glimpse of an interesting little drama—the old story, a lady and two admirers. For three or four days I saw the courtship going on. First one and then the other of the cock birds, finding his lady alone, would seize the opportunity, bowing and fluttering outstretched wings, to declare his love; but invariably in a minute or two his rival would break in upon his impassioned protestations, and round the Garden they would chase each other with a storm of angry words. All the while the cause of the trouble would sit quietly preening herself, the picture of demure indifference, or fly off to some favourite hunting-ground in search of caterpillars. Whether a desperate

battle was fought when I was not there to see and the prize was to the victor, or whether she made up her mind in some other way I cannot tell ; but eventually her choice was made, and with the favoured lover she too set about the business of site-hunting and examining the quality of the fibre on the palm-tree. Their nest was in a shrub almost beneath the shadow of the palm, so that building material was not far to carry, and in a very few days the first was laid of the pretty mauve-pink eggs, mottled with blotches of a darker hue.

What of the other disconsolate swain ? I could always recognise him by a stray white feather in his right wing which proclaimed him a bit of a dandy. It may be that was why he failed ; perchance the lady was a believer in solid everyday virtues for which she declined to give him credit. Two or three days after he had received his final dismissal I saw him perched alone in a far corner of the Garden, and as I approached he gave utterance to the cheery piping note which voices the bulbul's belief that this is the best of all possible worlds. He was not going to wear his heart on his sleeve, and would perhaps start shortly in quest of a more com-
plaisant fair. But I do not believe it ; in his innermost heart he knew that there was but one bird in the Garden for him. Only to the world at large would he seem to say with the poet, ' If she be not fair for me, what care I how fair she be ! '

A bird that will by no means be ignored is the Koël, or hot-weather-bird, who says ' Who are you ? Who are you ! Who are you ! ', each phrase rising higher and higher in loud clear not unmusical notes until he cracks on a top one, and then runs down an irregular scale of softer single notes or stops to begin his endless interrogatory again. For it is endless, day or night, wherefore he is not over-beloved of mankind, at least of European mankind, and many is the imprecation called down upon his head by unfortunate humans, mind and body pining for sleep in those long stifling hours before the dawn. I have said advisedly ' European mankind,' for the Indian can give no higher praise to his beloved than to liken her voice to the koël's. A fine bird, clad in glossy black, with wonderful rubies for eyes, he belongs to the cuckoo tribe and, like most of his kindred, believes in boarding out his off-spring. At home one looks upon this habit as a vice that sadly mars the good name of the otherwise welcome harbinger of summer. But in the koël vice becomes virtue and, for me, redeems in some measure

the character of this disturber of one's repose. For the foster-mother whom he chooses to bring up his young is that past-mistress of iniquity, and foe of all youthful bird life, the Indian crow. The crow does not, of course, realise the true significance of the koël's proximity to her nest, but she undoubtedly senses the fact that it is in some way inimical to her brood. Whenever, therefore, she detects the koël husband lurking near by, she gives chase at once with raucous screams of rage. That is the opportunity of the koël's lady who, dressed in mottled grey, quite unlike the sable plumage of her spouse, has been waiting in hiding round the corner; quietly she slips in and removes one of the corbie's treasures to make room for her own. And when the old crow returns in triumph she never dreams of connecting with the departed enemy the low-toned chuckle that issues from an adjacent tree.

A bird who is somewhat plebeian, or at any rate middle-class, but possessed of considerable force of character withal, is a member of the starling family, the Myna. At the end of July a pair of mynas had their nest in the bungalow roof, and as the youthful family increased in size and internal capacity the parents were kept busy supplying a want that seemed insatiable. In August we were cursed with a plague of flies, the most effective—or least ineffective—method of dealing with whom lay in a liberal use of adhesive fly-papers. One morning a fly-paper attracted the attention of one of the mynas, which had come into the verandah prospecting, and the next moment his feet were entrapped by the sticky stuff. He quickly struggled free, and thereafter walked with circumspection. But the supply of ample provender ready to hand was too generous to be neglected, in view of that hungry clamour from the roof. His mate soon came to see what was the attraction, and from then it became the regular thing for the mynas to collect beakfuls of flies, a score at a time, from the paper. Catching individual flies took time, so that the fly-papers were unquestionably a labour-saving device of great value. But, so far at least as the flies were concerned, the sticky substance with which the papers were furnished appeared to possess poisonous attributes, and we feared for the effects upon the callow birdlings. Our anxiety, however, proved groundless and ere long the parent birds had taught their children to fly, and brought them down to the hospitable verandah which produced so many good things. For, when a diet of flies began to pall, it needed but an importunate cock of the head to one side,

with a bright-eyed glance, and biscuits were nearly always forthcoming, a welcome change of fare.

The babies, when they first arrived, had of course to be fed, but they soon learned to pick up biscuits for themselves and the why and wherefore of fly-papers; except one lazy or backward youngster who would sit with fluttering wings and imploring open beak, appealing to the rapidly vanishing parental instincts of the old birds. That could not go on for ever and there arrived a day when the original pair came alone to the verandah; the children had been turned out to make their own way in the world.

That delightful exponent of Indian natural history, E. H. Aitken (EHA), has, in his *Tribes on my Frontier*, justly taken exception to the libel contained in the scientific name—*Acridotheres tristis*—of one of the most cheerful of birds. But that the generic name, signifying 'grasshopper-hunter,' is no misfit we had about this time ample evidence. For after the flies had gone—more or less—there came an invasion of grasshoppers, a green-faced people with an equine cast of countenance, and right manfully did the mynas tackle these new intruders. Never had two birds a better time.

When, after some months' absence, I returned to the Garden, a second brood of myna children had come into being, been introduced to the hospitable verandah, and in their turn sent out to seek their fortunes elsewhere. But the old birds were permanent and privileged members of the household. When they had had their breakfast they would sit on the back or arm of one's chair, and bow their thanks in an inimitable fashion of their own, or make polite conversation if they thought one wanted entertaining.

Familiar though they were, however, they never attained to quite the same degree of intimacy as the 'Scoot,' the little striped palm squirrel which used to come, three or four of him, for a biscuit to the Lady of the Garden's hand, and would sit up nibbling a titbit on her knee, though liable to be scared into flight by the slightest movement. EHA calls him 'that painted iniquity,' and I admit his capacities for mischief are of a high order, but even in his villainy he is an attractive little beast.

A neighbour came in one day with a yarn about a weird thing in wild cats which sat in a big tree outside his gate and every evening signalled the passing of the daylight with a mournful 'miaou!' I had my doubts, it did not sound a cat-like habit.

So I investigated. And I discovered that the mysterious 'cat,' while lacking not certain of the feline attributes, yet flew—on wings whose name was silence—being neither more nor less than a big brown owl! A pair of them there were which, when not playing at 'cats,' used to talk to each other in a strange loud trilling call that sounded as if they were making soapsuds for the blowing of gigantic bubbles.

As a class, I think no birds possess a more marked individuality than the owls, with their wise faces and air of detachment from the ordinary affairs of life, their supernatural noiselessness of flight, and their voices which speak in varied tones but always with a note of the weird and uncanny that is in keeping with the character of a bird of night. One voice of the night in particular I remember, at a shooting camp not far from the Garden, deep of tone but with a peculiar quavering trill which, repeated every two or three minutes throughout the long night hours, from a tree above our tents, was too much for the nerves of one distracted human wooing sleep in vain. Wherefore the owner of the voice, a great Horned Owl, was—regretfully—condemned to an untimely end. A still finer bird, a monarch of his race, is the huge Eagle Owl, to whom I have always put down a wonderful deep-toned single note, which it were almost irreverence to term a hoot, that one occasionally hears in the depths of the jungle.

Then there was the mad owl of the Garden, who for one week used to visit us nightly, sitting on a branch of the palm-tree and ever and anon making an aimless dash at a standing lamp, banging his wings against the glass or even blundering into the verandah, and behaving generally in insane un-owl-like fashion. Perhaps his keeper found him at length, and he was escorted back to some owl asylum in one of the secret places of the jungle, for he disappeared to return no more.

There is one of the family, however, who, while as sane as any of his big brothers, yet, like Peter Pan, never grows up. Diminutive in size, and with all the precocity of childhood, the little Spotted Owlet has declined for all time to learn the first lesson of the owl family—decorum—and, to the horror of his staid and stately relations, insists upon treating life as one long game. I expect he was once taken to a circus when very young, in one of Dame Nature's moments of aberration, and then and there made up his mind to be a clown. And right effectively he clowns it. For, if you think it over, one of the most successful elements in a clown's

performance is incongruity. And there can be nothing more incongruous than the association of any idea of the chosen bird of Minerva, the embodiment of sedate wisdom, with this absurd noisy little comicality. Yet you have only to glance at him to see that he is, beyond question, an owl of the bluest blood. Watch him sit on a telegraph wire with his back towards you and, without moving his body, turn his head right round and look you in the face with the most preternaturally solemn of expressions. The next moment he winks! and in a flash hurls himself upon his brother sitting on the next wire, knocking him flying from his perch in true harlequinade style, with a flow of language the while that only a monkey could rival; then in demure silence slowly turns his head and looks at you once more. I am certain he winks again, though it is getting too dark to see.

And yet—is there something in him of the Punchinello of the old song? At any rate he can be serious when he chooses. One evening in June I was sitting alone in the gathering dusk on the old grass plot. The Burra Sahib and the Lady of the Garden were away in the Hills—the Hills! clear and blue was their outline on the none-so-far distant horizon, yet to those of us condemned to swelter in the pre-monsoon moist heat, with a temperature so high that a few degrees more or less made no difference at all, the Hills, or what they stood for, were at the very back of beyond. Day by day one had looked up at the brazen sky, where heaven was hid by the spreading shadowy wings of the Spectre of Famine, with an unspoken prayer—‘how long?’ And it did not make for a lightening of the burden that one’s own official responsibilities were intimately concerned with the loss and suffering which another failure of the monsoon rains must bring. If then there was a wound which went deep, however well concealed it might be from view, what wonder that the little black devils, who lie in wait for the soul, should seize their opportunity, when all Nature was desponding, to plunge and turn the knife therein?

The little owlet knew. There had been no sign of him a moment earlier; I did not see him come; but he was there, sitting on the grass, not more than three or four yards from my chair; nearer than he had ever been before. There was no precocious chatter this evening, no monkey tricks. But for ten long minutes, as twilight deepened into dusk, with eyes fixed upon me he sat—in silence. We were friends. Can any words express a deeper sympathy than the silence of friendship—when it is the real thing?

Then, with a farewell as noiseless as had been his greeting, he was gone. Nor did I see him go, he just was not. And the little black devils too were gone.

Next on my list is the Roller, the so-called 'Blue Jay' of India. I think few colour effects in nature are more striking on a small scale than that produced by the roller when he starts to fly, and from beneath his unassuming cloak there flashes out a pair of wings whose bars of purest turquoise contrast with a beautiful deep blue that in some lights is almost violet. Why this sudden change and display? The Hindu calls the roller the bird of Vishnu, and Vishnu the Preserver is but another manifestation of Brahma the Creator. Need one seek for an explanation of the beauty of the creature beyond the Creator's pleasure therein?

When beauty is in question one's thoughts fly naturally to the Paradise Flycatcher, a lovely bird with jet-black head and neck, but clad, the rest of him, in a robe of purest white with two delicate long streamers that trail behind him like pennons in the wind. Legend has it that originally no speck of black marred the snowy purity of his plumage; but in overweening pride he sinned—I do not remember exactly how—and in punishment his face was blackened before the world. Even to-day he may not don his gown of white until he has left the follies of youth far behind him. For the first two years of his life he is clad in chestnut and looks like a brilliant bulbul until the streamers begin to grow in his second year. His lady never has them, and dresses in chestnut all her life; even so, with her toque of shining black and eyes of blue, she is always a thing of beauty.

There were still others who deserve more than the passing word which is all that I can give them. The Magpie Robin, always spick and span, with a charming song, was one of the friendliest of them all, and through the long hot weather was always there to assure us that the rains would surely come. But when they had arrived, and he thought the Garden needed cheering up no longer, he disappeared.

The dainty Fantail Flycatcher, pirouetting with outspread tail among the rose bushes, was shyer of performing in public. Often indeed one heard his liquid trill, of only four or five notes, that is among the softest and sweetest of all bird melodies. But his

real song, a more elaborate conception, was only given to the world in the still last half-hour before the dawn. Then, regularly morning after morning, from the neem-tree near the verandah where I had my bed, he used to sing for me alone. But the bravest songster of the night was the Crested Lark, who used to perform at midnight, soaring aloft towards where the Scorpion shone in splendour. And the stars twinkled back 'Encore!', for the burden of his song was Hope and that of course is ever the message of the stars themselves.

And yet there are people who say that in the plains of India no birds sing.

Then there were the green Bee-eaters, who sat in a row, like small girls at school, along the telegraph wire. There was the iridescent little Purple Sunbird, collecting tiny insects from the hollyhock flowers to carry to his mate ensconced in a hanging bunch of rubbish and spiders' webs that none would take to be a nest. There were the Doves of three or four species that crooned and crooned and crooned again. There was—but I must make an end. Just one bird remains who can on no account be omitted.

Who in India does not know Jack the Giant-killer, the black Drongo or King-crow? He does not kill the giants indeed, but he makes their lives a burden to them, owls and hawks and crows and all the tribe of evil-doers. Not a great bird of them but he can put to ignominious flight. The oriole knows it, golden bird of the sun, but no man-at-arms, and oftentimes builds his nest beneath the shadow of the little sable warrior's wing. And what a cheery little champion it is, perching on the flagstaff stay, diving with a flirt of his long forked tail at a passing butterfly, then hurling defiance at a mongoose who for a moment has poked a pink enquiring nose from beneath a rose-bush. So long as he is on the alert, the prowling assassin will do no harm. Perhaps his note is discordant, yet it holds a sweetness that is all its own. He is a lovable character, the little king-crow. Last upon my roster, as a personality he is very far from least.

NO TRUMPETS.

BY F. SANDFORD WILTON.

As he glanced out through his surgery window, he saw her coming up the village street.

Her slender figure was closely wrapped in a long black coat. He recognised the garment at once. It had evidently been dyed for the occasion.

The colour was not unbecoming to her pale, clear beauty, and his heart quickened its beat. Then he noticed the cheap suitcase in her hand, and with a gloomy frown he turned away.

A few moments later the door of the tiny room beyond was opened. Light footsteps crossed the floor and a hand tapped gently at the glass panel.

‘Come in.’

She entered. ‘Good morning, doctor.’

‘Good morning, Annie. Sit down.’

She obeyed, placing the suit-case by the side of her chair and folding her hands in her lap. The right hand was ungloved. It was small and fragile, and the skin was semi-transparent, revealing a network of delicate blue veins.

The young doctor stared at it closely as he said, with some awkwardness:

‘I was very sorry to hear about your mother. It’s been a great shock for you.’

The girl nodded. ‘And she seemed as well as anything the last time I was up home—only a month back.’

Among the loose papers on his desk there was a letter. He picked it up. A flimsy sheet of ruled paper. It looked as though it had been torn from a cheap exercise book, but the handwriting that covered it was neat and flowing.

He glanced through its contents again, although he already knew them by heart. When he spoke his voice was gently deprecating—as though he were reasoning with a small child who wanted to do something foolish.

‘Now then, Annie, what’s all this nonsense about going back to London to look after your brothers and sisters?’

Her liquid brown eyes stared at him blankly. 'But of course I'm going.'

'Why?'

She shrugged her shoulders. It seemed to her a stupid question, but she answered it patiently enough:

'Well, they must have somebody to look after them. And there's only me . . . now.'

'But you can't do it. You mustn't do it. I . . . I won't hear of it.'

'Why ever not?'

He tried another tack. 'Haven't you any relations? Any aunts and uncles, and so on?'

'No. There's no one. Only me.'

'Are you sure?'

She nodded emphatically.

He regarded her for some moments in silence. It was not going to be very easy to tell her the truth.

She was barely twenty-one years of age, and the eldest of a large family. Her father, dead three years, had been a London dock labourer; her mother, a charwoman. Rough diamonds both.

But Annie herself, by some queer trick of destiny, was the cut and polished gem.

Her frail loveliness, her natural refinement, and her instinct for beauty were alike paradoxical. It was as though—to vary the metaphor—a homely fern in a pot had put forth an orchid, and having produced this one exotic bloom had reverted to type, for her brothers and sisters were all unexceptional.

On leaving school she had worked at a mantle factory, but after a while her health broke down.

She went into hospital. A weakness of the heart was revealed.

In due course they transferred her to a convalescent home. Here she made good progress, and at the end of three months was pronounced fit for light work.

But it would have been criminal to send her back to the town. She needed country air, fresh food, and medical supervision for the next few years. After that she would probably be able to lead an almost normal life again.

Accordingly, an opening as dressmaker was found for her in a small village, where there was sufficient work to provide a modest living, but not enough to overtax her strength.

She was put in the care of the young village doctor, and as

the months went by, her delicate, haunting beauty had proved strangely disturbing to his peace of mind.

Meanwhile, up in London, her widowed mother was struggling to support the other five children. A postal order arrived from the country village nearly every week. They managed somehow.

Then the mother suddenly fell ill. Annie hurried home.

A fortnight later the doctor received a letter from the girl saying that her mother was dead, and that she herself was going to remain in London to look after the rest of the family. But first of all she was returning to the village to collect her belongings and say good-bye to her friends.

And here she was.

The doctor looked at her gravely. 'I'm afraid you don't realise that you're not strong enough to keep house for five children. Not nearly strong enough.'

She shrugged her shoulders, saying as before :

'Somebody must do it, and there's only me.'

He sighed. 'How old are your brothers and sisters?'

She counted them off on her fingers. 'Willie's fifteen; Mabel's twelve; Albert nine; Gracie seven; and Johnnie nearly four.'

'Does Willie go to work?'

'Yes.'

'Then *he's* all right. And the others would be well cared for, you know, in an orphanage. There——'

'Charity children!'

He stared at her in amazement. Her pale face had flushed, and her brown eyes were wide with horror.

'Don't be so foolish, Annie. They'd be perfectly happy.'

She shook her head. 'Oh no, they wouldn't. Those places may be all right for some. But not for them that's had a good home and a good mother. Why, my mother 'ud turn over in her grave if she knew that her four youngest were charity children.'

He looked at her a trifle impatiently. He could not understand the stubborn pride and the deep-rooted family instinct so typical of her class. He thought it absurd that she should speak with such abhorrence of 'charity children,' when it was obvious that, in one form or another, her family would have to be dependent on charity.

He pointed this out, as delicately as possible.

'How much does Willie earn?' he began.

'A pound a week.'

'Well, Annie, you can't all live on that, can you?'

She stared. 'Of course not.'

'Then what will you do?'

'Oh, we'll be all right,' she assured him. 'I'm going back to my old job. It's all fixed up. And the mantle factory is nice and handy, like. I shall be able to pop home in the middle of the day and see to the children's dinners.'

He leapt to his feet. 'You little fool! You're not even strong enough to look after your family. But going out to work as well—why, it would be suicide. How long do you think your heart would stand the strain?'

'I don't know.'

He hesitated for some moments. And then he told her:

'About three years.'

She considered this. 'Ah well,' she said calmly, 'by that time Mabel will have left school, and Willie will be earning more. They'll be able to manage then, on their own. Mabel's a good girl.'

The doctor gasped. He had hoped that his cold statement of fact would frighten her; break down her resolution. Instead of which, she had merely seen in it the justification of her plan. Three years—it would be long enough.

He tried to reason with her, to coax her, using every argument he could think of—except one.

She listened meekly enough, her great brown eyes fixed on his. But he could make no impression. She knew perfectly well what she was doing. And she was doing it as a matter of course. Because it was the obvious thing to do; the only thing. So why argue about it?

Her simplicity and integrity baffled him. At last he turned away and walked over to the window. Stood there with his back towards her, staring blankly at the row of cottages opposite.

He was not fighting this battle in an altogether disinterested spirit. Far from it.

He understood now why her delicate loveliness had proved so disturbing to his peace of mind. And why not? There was nothing incongruous in the idea. She had a natural grace and refinement that fitted her for any social position. And with proper care, her health need never cause anxiety. Moreover, he had a shrewd idea that she was by no means indifferent to him. She had a way of looking at him sometimes . . .

He was, as yet, a poor man. Heavily in debt, for he was

buying his practice. However, he could support a wife. But not—

He felt a sudden blind resentment against those uncouth brothers and sisters of hers, up in London. They were quite impossible. Out of the question. She must make her choice.

He wheeled round.

'Annie,' he said. His voice sounded queer and remote. 'There's another reason why you mustn't go back to London. I love you. I want you to marry me.'

She flinched. The faint colour drained from her cheeks. A frightened, beseeching look came into her eyes. But she kept them on his face as she slowly shook her head . . .

A few moments later she was walking down the village street. She had no more farewell visits to pay, and presently she turned aside and took a footpath across the fields. It was a short cut and it brought her out at the back of the station. The gate leading on to the down platform was open. She went through.

To her surprise she found quite a crowd of people waiting for the local train. She asked a rosy-cheeked girl in a school hat if anything important was happening that day in the neighbouring town.

The girl stared. 'Why, miss, didn't you know? Joyce Irving's coming this afternoon. There's to be a civic reception. She was born in Bannixstone.'

Annie's eyes lit up. Joyce Irving! Of course! The girl who had just made a record solo flight across the Atlantic.

She pictured to herself the main streets of Bannixstone . . . flags flying, bands playing, crowds cheering . . .

She sighed. How wonderful to be like Joyce Irving! To do something grand and heroic—

A signal fell with a noisy clatter. She looked round. That meant that the London train was due on the opposite platform. She took her suit-case and hurried towards the footbridge . . .

So she passed over, and no trumpets sounded for her on the other side.

THIS WAS A MAN.

BY W. J. BLYTON.

WHEN years ago I toiled at an exciting profession in the roar of London and in the most exacting quarter of London, I escaped now and then upon a moment's impulse to the waiting house and welcome of an old, unconventional friend in a valley by the South Downs. Strange hazards had made us friends originally; he was fifteen years my senior; he had 'lived dangerously' most of his fifty-four years in wide silences in other continents, as cowboy, hobo, preacher, diver, agitator, teacher, writer, soldier, mounted policeman, trapper; and what could he have in common with me—in those days a city man, chained all his years to the same galley and the same oar? What, but a few deep ideas and tastes? These bridged all gulfs, and they do so still.

I could not then have known, however I envied his lot and his fitness for it, that so soon I was to duplicate it, with a difference; that I was to shed all that external skin by which for years I had been known, and to live in and by the country as a hard-working farmer, and to carry on, even more consecutively and intensely than was possible in literary London, those other pursuits of the mind which in those days he combined so luckily, making of his one-storey homestead a dwelling for cattle, poultry, goats, pigs, sheep; for children, friends, chance visitors, and books and ideas.

That powerful nostalgia for space and quiet which descends at moments upon the Londoner would attack me some time on a Friday; and from the Fleet Street post office a wire would go to his sequestered place in a fold of the downs, warning him to expect me. Rapidly I put my office affairs in train, and within a couple of hours I was on the way—*sans* sleeping garments, and with little more than my fare back on Monday or Tuesday; for our friendship was of the sort to stand such strains and not notice them. It was for some specific human quality in the man and his household, his small farm and house, his books and talk, that subconsciously I made this pilgrimage, as I see now; not for the views, grand as these were, of wide valleys hung with enormous woods, of 'the dim blue goodness of the Weald,' of a fragment of the Pilgrims'

Way now grass-grown, and a glimpse of sea imagined more than seen. These prospects to him were mild and home-like, after the Rockies or the Sierras riding white on the distant horizons. Of the wilderness he had suddenly had enough; the call of small green England was felt and obeyed, and with all his savings in his belt he made for New York harbour and thence to England—without any career mapped out, and with even a home to find: and before he had found either, he had found his future wife, in South England.

On essentials, and in many minor whims and tastes, there was unison between us, and therefore no ceremony: we were capable of taking up a discussion at the point left three months before. This is a thing so rare that astonishingly few people, otherwise fortunate, ever know it. Thousands half-consciously miss it, not knowing what it is that lacks. And he himself was such an original, yet an indubitable person of this time and country, that a visit to this quiet, unpretentious spot in imagination may be remembered by the reader.

The little branch-line train into which I have changed pants to a halt at the platform that dreams its trains away amid the foothills. I am the only passenger to alight, and when the two-coached train has slid on into the summer quiet, leaving the metals gleaming under the sun, I walk up the lonely, dusty-white road that ribbons toward green summits, and from a rise see a hamlet or two silent like a vision in some lake's tranquility. A breeze stirs and lips in the dry tall grasses of the wayside and I slow down in this stillness of sun and verdure to accustom the senses to the solitude and width of things. It is hard at first to do this. Here is another and a different world from the incessant, momentary solicitations and overstimulus of town: half a county spreads its campaign before me with a sense of vastness, of nothing-doing, as of a sleeping picture.

Quite suddenly comes the reward, the leap of the blood at recovered quiet, at invisibility to the crowd, at nothing in the wide world asking or challenging the brain. I want to sing; but am approaching two cottages where hollyhocks shine with rubied chalices in the sun, and a tethered goat's is the first voice I hear in this shire of Alfred's and the South Saxons. A lone crow migrates across the blue of the sky, gives forth one caw, and silence floods back over everything. The horizons seem to-day to have gathered within them the whole of peace.

A delicate delirium of world-strangeness is on me. What am

I doing here? What was I worrying about near St. Paul's three or four hours ago? I forget. Already I feel my body and its impulses, the desire to walk on and on, more than I remember the fidget which all these weeks has passed for thinking and managing.

Then far off I see my friend. A quarter of a mile away, he is recognisable: the free gait, the persisting high-shoulders and long arms of the rider of the plains, the intent forward-swinging walk so subtly different from the progress of the country folk. He stops at a skewbald signpost which has unfamiliar village names on it, and reaches an arm into the hollow trunk of a tree, bringing out a parcel—it is one of his pre-arranged goods-delivery stations. He waves a hand and comes on along the rough, tree-shadowed lane. We meet in a patch of shadow, grip hands, and plunge into talk.

The next day, it appears, he must go across country on foot and by local coaches to Winchester to copy an inscription for a book he is writing; to see a friend; to have a free drink of ale at the ancient almshouse near the statue of Ælfred; and to price some farm stock. I am welcome either to accompany him or to linger among his apple and plum trees or savour his collection of books. What, I ask him, is the book he is engaged upon now? for something is usually on the anvil. A study of Will Langland's *Piers Plowman* and the early stirrings of folk-feeling in England, taking John Ball and Jack Cade in his stride. And I know by that token that we shall be hammering this out in his garden snug by the light of lamp and stove till bedtime at ten o'clock for several nights.

Tea is waiting: his restful, fresh-complexioned wife, a born countrywoman, does the honours; and two tanned sons and three daughters take their places at table, regardless of the wasps which compete for the jam and honey. After milking several cows, while a son milks the goats, he is freed for a walk with me through a plantation reddened by sunset to the very scattered hamlet, my cigarette smoke anæmic and urban beside the rich reek of his strong tobacco. And, while we are walking, consider my companion's past and present. In fragments I had heard of his amazing movements. Suddenly cutting cables, he slipped from England and the profession he was marked for, and gambled first on Canada, while still a boy. He was at the mercy of moods and circumstance. Tramping south, he was soon among 'settlers' who never meant to settle, but to gather dollars and go 'home': they existed in temporary log shanties run up in a few weeks. One evening he

returned from a long journey with laden sleigh, from the bush where he had been chopping all day, to find a light burning in their cabin on the distant hillside. A strange team of horses occupied the stable: in the shack, a couple of roughs had bundled out the old bedding and installed the new. He could less complain because he and his partner had seized the place with no better right. Women there were none for leagues around. Strange housekeeping methods flourished. Butter was made by putting the cream in an old cocoa tin, which, tied on the horn of the saddle, was jolted in the day's riding into passable butter. Miles away was a school house; but no sooner was a woman teacher installed than Buckskin Billy or another would marry her. The men were of all lands, all trades, all grades. One was once a Parisian clown; one an organist formerly; ex-soldiers were numerous. All exiles! Yet, he insisted, the life was prosaic. The novelist and film-producer have thrown a halo of romance over the life. Romance there was little, and that was in the scenical grandeur of the setting; a combination of mountain, forest, river and plain such as the Creator has rarely designed, a fit theatre for the unfolding of the life of a nation or for any story. Instead of an epic, however, there were ordinary grasping folk too busy in somewhat discouraging conditions to lift their eyes to the peaks or ride off on cavaliering expeditions. For several years, he became proficient at lassoing, breaking horses, and rounding cattle and sheep, at whistling, singing, accordion-playing, gymnastics and swimming. Several books of poetry remained shut after one sampling: they were 'indoor' and felt artificial, though in England they had been favourites. He fastened on to a dime copy of Epictetus. Another, of Herbert Spencer's, he threw out on the prairie when the agnosticism of it depressed him.

'I've often wondered whether anyone found it. A cowboy's opinion of Herbert Spencer might be worth giving—if it were repeatable.'

There were Round-ups. They scoured the prairie, sweeping up as they rode all the animals into one vast bellowing bunch which must be guarded night and day. Each rancher would 'cut out' his own stock. And on Sunday afternoons, the boys would gather, and sit on the corral fence to watch one break in a broncho. Or a fire broke out in the hills and all would help the Mounted Police to fight the miles of flame—the grandest spectacle he recalls: the immense dark mountains unperturbed, and behind them an evening sky, rosy with sunset.

'For one summer I herded two thousand sheep,' he told me, 'and enjoyed a solitude so great that the sight of a rider on the skyline was like a ship to sailors on a raft. I lived then in a movable box on wheels, the size of a bathing machine almost—a good place in mosquito time, for there was not room for many of them.'

Twice he was tossed by bulls and nearly killed. Once he was lost on the plains and knew panic—the fear of Pan. He was unclassified: he had, as he says, 'taken vows in the Order of Unholy Poverty.' But he was immunised for ever from the doctrinaires and day-dreamers, knowing of what stuff human nature is. Though without gear or country or friends, he was peaceful at heart: something grew in him so fundamental and simple as to be unnamable. He joined the Lost Legion at Klondyke, ran a local paper at Calgary, Medicine Hat and Montana. Once, utterly destitute, he and a pal got into a refrigerator box on a freight train, and there stayed for two nights and three days. After a night in a Salvation Army shelter, they accomplished the next stage in the hay-box of a car carrying horses. Then they had to take to a dangerous perch on the brake-beam again. Later, after ups and downs, or downs only, he crossed to Buffalo to enlist under the star-spangled banner. 'The army is the poor man's tourist agency,' he told me. 'Curiosity rather than patriotism enlists men.' He saw much of life and death, and was forced-marched into illness and given up for lost. He returned by cattle-boat, preached, wrote, agitated awhile; married and rediscovered green England.

It is strange how often men of mental mark are in some sort foundlings, and how early a hard destiny begins to mould those who are to encounter unusual intellectual, spiritual experience. No prophetically appreciative temperament was by to encourage, no sage to guide: but the result would seem an argument for some divinity that shapes our ends.

A large moon rose over the woodlands as we walked and talked. He had just had an invitation from towns in several States to speak to book-clubs and college circles on Chaucer or the Elizabethans. He likes the unreserve of the Yankees whom he has known in many weathers of the spirit; in booms and slumps, strikes and lock-outs. But go he cannot: a son is to be placed out in the world, and a father's place was near, and moreover the holding needs attention. However, he is writing for a few of their reviews

still ; and New York has sent him the proofs of a book by him on—believe it or not—Dante's *Vita Nuova* and *Divine Comedy*, and his Florentine feuds and loves. He really has mastered his subject and the literature of it : I trot out what I happen to have read—Dean Church's mellow essay, allusions by Shelley, Macaulay, Lowell and certain annotators. But all this he has passed. Yet, while he corrects one chapter, I correct another for him by the paraffin light which leaves half the room dim in our shadows, while a moth or night-bird flicks against the window out of the rustling dark :

'In that part of the youthful year, when the Sun tempers his locks beneath Aquarius, and the nights already wane toward half the day.'

These quoted passages require careful collation with the poem, and for a while we are absorbed. No sound, save the unsteady gurgling cry outdoors of a barn-owl, the chirr of a chain in a stable, the spurt of an occasional match by one of us as we smoke, the rising of a soft night-wind. Something deeper in me is fed and contented by this taciturn hour of companionship. Then we talk. It is not the self-regardant talk of worldlings in town : it is about Richard Rolle, Mother Julian of Norwich and other mystics of our alleged practical, secular-minded race ; and Sir Thomas Browne, a favourite with us both. Then, or on some other still night in the hut, we range over St. Augustine's and St. Theresa's writings, and Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*.

In the lamp-glimmer and little smoke-cloud I look across at my chum. He lives among ideas, and they blow away from him the vague selfish fears, social and relating to one's career and pocket, which are the half of hyper-civilised life. The universal is the true antiseptic. Great ideas brace and make brave those who traffic in them. But is it supposed he has been exempt from the tragedy which visits men ? Far from it. His first and darling daughter was wrenched from him a few years ago in a terrible way ; leaving his wife numb with a self-defensive indifference to life, refusing to commit her feelings to anything or anybody.

Him also it rocked to his foundations—till they settled on some rock, religious in nature. Behind all he said upon the black paradoxes of existence was a weight of experience and initiation, so that, when a great trouble came to me, it was on him that I leaned hard, even when we were not together. For a man of a

few profound certainties, he was refreshingly ready to say at times, 'I do not know.' Indeed, he knew the wisdom of the short view:

'Disasters, do the best we can,
Will reach both great and small;
And he is oft the wisest man
Who is not wise at all.'

The utmost shrewdness cannot circumvent many a visitation; and uncaring Gallios escape scot-free sometimes. Therefore, beyond ordinary prudence, feel no anxiety.

Another tough vital clue he had quarried from living was that pity, love, grief—noble as they are—are passions and fires that require stern curbing. In black hours, reason easily abdicates in favour of emotions which have been idealised, and by others' admiration have been intensified: till calmness in bereavement is mistaken for callousness, and coolness in disaster for unfeeling stoicism.

But justice to self and the world command moderation. You, too, have your rights: *you* have to live, to go on. No less than the dead, you are an irreplaceable part of the divine purpose. It is not loyalty to the dead, to prey upon one's own vitals: it is only destroying another life. *Do your best, and leave the rest.* The first done, entitles you to do the second. Hospital doctors and nurses achieve their success *not* by feeling but by deliberate economy of feeling: mental force which might become over-sympathy, and so disable them, is transmuted into *action*, and practical observation.

A dozen times in his life (and I too know similar situations) he has had violently to exclude emotion and grief and fear from his mind, and deliberately concentrate on more comfortable issues—the alternative being misery and breakdown which could assist nobody. Coming from him, these hints told: for the character behind it is the better half of any advice. He had been knocked 'down and out' a few times, he knew the pinches of the body as well as those of the soul, and 'ought to have been dead several times': but here he was, alive and fulfilled. If he had allowed his vivid, half-Celtic imagination to make trouble, it would have done: but he outwitted it by open-air work, forcing the creative faculty to some labour, and by paying attention to others. A herb called 'self-heal' grew in his garden, and it reminded me of his secret.

Just one other key to life of his I will mention: the power of simply *hoping*. 'Hope on: hope hard in the subtle thing that's

spirit.' The most incredible turns in fortune's wheel occur. He held that the last lines of Shelley's 'Prometheus' were ultimate wisdom, those about 'Love, from its awful throne of patient power in the wise heart.' Patience wins in 'the last giddy hour of dread endurance'—yes, 'from the slippery, steep, and narrow verge of crag-like agony'—

'to *hope* till hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.'

One man, so minded, he knew, could save a situation from which ordinary-calibre men dismiss themselves. When most people have despaired and said, 'This is the end of things for me,' he knew that there was one thing to do—to plod stubbornly on; the end was not yet, one house of life after another awaits us. He could not run away from any post: he knew that in battle, more men are killed while running away than in facing it out. And if you cannot fight in the light, fight in the darkness. No wonder he recognised kindred souls in Browning and all who take the militant attitude toward life. A good fight hallowed the cause.

I hope those few lines will not displease those who have the climbing spirit and can breathe the ether of the heights. Not all the time do we need this iron ration creed, but—we may. He had his dogmas, but about them he was reticent, believing that in each man they grew of themselves, and if genuine could not be imposed from without. 'Piety' in the ancient sense was his; deeper than formulated religion, and simpler, yet powerful. It is an attitude of 'sublime dependence,' a sense too vast and overpowering to be fastidious in its form, preceding and outliving many cosmogonies and myths. In these last we believe, with our intellects; but before the vast facts of providence, destiny, and standing to our posts in this storm of living, the difference between man and man, between the smaller varieties of religious expression, is dwarfed. The adherents of every creed, the members of every class and nation, all ages and both sexes, are put through the great mills of mortality in very much the same way; in the last resort there is no room for pedantry or exclusiveness. The elemental experiences and morality are no discoveries of our own with which we can meddle, but disclosures of the Universal which like the sunlight falls on wise and unwise, good and evil, and they claim and they permit no other acknowledgment from little man than the obedience of his life and the plain confession of his lips and his bearing. They

are in the Psalms, in Job, in Homer, in Sophocles, in Shakespeare ; they are revealed to 'pagan' as well as to Christian, to the peasant more than to the intellectualist.

About Nature, he was no sentimentalist ; no farmer is that, or can afford to be. It is something to be used or outwitted, like the weather. Nevertheless, he lived in it as intimately as a chick in its shell ; its indifferences and violences somehow did not shock his moral perceptions, for he took the rough with the smooth—and the smooth consisted of the instinct of altruism and sacrifice which are nascent in even sub-human life. With an eye for birds, insects and herbs, and all detail, he yet took nature (out of working hours) as a mountain-path to an ideal world. No complete theory of the world was tenable : pain, accident, rain rotting his corn, blight ruining his fruit, disease, inexplicable deaths of people—these were real ; but real also was the lark singing in June's blue, bumper harvests in some autumns, happy evenings with the family at the fireside, song, rich reading, the commerce of ideas and friendship. Nature was Rhadamanthine—and merciful. Truth limps after error, justice drags behind injustice ; but they get there, in time, and at a cost—he did not blink the cost. Winter is longer than summer ; there is more endurance or perseverance in life than ecstasy and ease ; but the world as it is (not as we dream it) brought us down to our bare manhood, and bade us understand it out of that. Courage was a better moral truth-finder than propositions.

On more usual subjects, he could be humorous and shrewd. He did not despise writing a tale when one occurred to him, and his style was in keeping with his life. He had caught his English at its living source, among the poets and prose-writers of its best days ; his quotations were of the purest ore ; he finished his sentences, and balanced them, as if keeping a log in his shanty on the plains ; he did not care for hasty shorthand or sign-writing in certain codes of modern cliques. His metaphors and images were of his own getting, owed to no book. He never (an endearing trait) repeated a proverb on trust ; it had first to be tested on his own pulses. He wrote slowly, as became one who once did not handle a pen for years, but had listened instead to his own thoughts, the winds over Arizona and Texas, the rustle of the wilderness, the ripple of a creek, the call of coyotes and the wavering beaver-cry. He had kept among other things the brick-red face, smouldering eyes, far sight, and masculine tousled hair of those days.

He did not mind, nor did I, his yawning near ten o'clock in the

middle of my talk. 'Well,' he would say, 'this'll keep till morning.' There is work to be done, sleep to be slept meanwhile. He knocks out his pipe, puts it near his ink horn, lights a candle for me, and followed by my own giant shadow I find the little spare room; and in the quiet dawn I wake to feel I had never lain on a couch so restful as when his wife or a daughter knocked on the door and said: 'A cup of tea—on the mat. And breakfast in half an hour.'

Through the open window comes the resinous scent of the coniferous trees. All round the little farm is quietly busy: they rise here with the sun. They live economically, but they live: some of the best fresh produce of the place does not pay for transit, and so by an irony—and compensation—of our system it is eaten by the producers, as it comes straight from the ground or the tree. I gathered that things were sometimes a little tight with them: a cheque delayed, a local bad debt incurred, but somehow they lived on and in frugal comfort. In those days I saw this life and its attractiveness from the outside, as a visitor however attuned and sympathetic: to-day I see it from within, on the larger farm which at last my family and I run a few miles away—run, not as a hobby nor a subordinate thing, but for our livelihood. Our lives are insensibly and spontaneously reproducing many of the features of my friend's and his family's: oddly, some of his views rise now in me afresh as by a natural exhalation; like causes, I suppose, like effects.

Though younger than he, and differently experienced, I have seen as much as I can conveniently digest in the years left to me. There is a world to watch in my farm and in the village and its valley neighbours. As for 'experiences,' it is significance that counts, not number; and I am constantly amazed at the rarity with which I leave my own acres—or want to. If I miss looking-in on various 'events' in person I know they are largely repetitions of those at which I have been a spectator, and I have no tiniest feeling of being 'out of it.' Having been at consultations by the Cabinet with pressmen in moments of crisis, at full-dress debates, State openings of Parliament, prize-fights in stadia, Royal launches of great ships, first-nights, races; manœuvres on land and sea; under bombs; having spoken with Mussolini, Einstein, Pavlova, Milner, and a number of our statesmen and commanders; heard all the conductors and orchestras that matter, and popular authors at city luncheons; and Academy views; and chatted with *matinée* idols in their dressing-rooms; and read, as a duty or penance,

every London and important provincial daily paper, daily for consecutive years; having done these and a few other things, I am appeased—was, in fact, replete years ago. And none of them, perhaps, strike home to the more impressionable levels of a man as to meet and know a character such as I have sketched in rude outline. I will say something more: none of them make such a permanent or grateful mark on one as the books which my old comrade and I devoured and discussed so freely. Once, I knew what it was, detained for many busy, turbulent weeks from all glimpse of country and from inspired art, to rush to both again with a revulsion of homesickness, appetite and devotion. With sandwiches and several 'pocket poets' I absconded for the day to the most unexpected spots far from outer London, commonly ending (prophetically) at some farm, where I bought a glass of milk as an excuse for talking of the farm, to be mistaken sometimes for another of these inspectors or a buyer's scout. On those days I

'let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause,
And what the Swede intends, and what the French.'

No printer's devil at my elbow waited for my views on the Budget, the Foreign Office *communiqué*, the Paris *demarche*, the German decree, the latest Soviet plan. A life of all giving out and little taking in is not good for mental stamina; I was suffering from a rush of superficial intelligence to the head. A fallow day occasionally (when the world got on insultingly well without my opinion in its usual columns), a day of passivity under greater minds and voices, saved me from smartness; and only just. Then it was that I let Shelley sing to me, or Milton chant; or took from another pocket for half an hour something in 'that other harmony of prose.' It was good to taste again the glory of words, 'right words in the right order,' Landor, Newman, Mark Rutherford, Hudson; with the sense of another's mastery a reader can identify himself: 'all the charm of all the Muses often flowering in a lonely word.'

Well, to-day I, like my friend, have rather more time for the best, or anyhow come more freshly to it, with unused eyes, untired attention, a cleaner slate to write on. There comes at nights the fancy, or the conviction, that it is a greater thing to read the first-rate and lasting than to write the ephemeral; and that appreciation of a masterpiece is as grand an experience as to have produced it—and only several degrees less meritorious perhaps! It is a

fact to keep geniuses in order that even the supreme composers of music, verse, prose and plastic art are incomplete without us, impotent, unfulfilled : we are the other and needed half of Shakespeare, Beethoven, Turner and Wordsworth. We are the instruments they play on, and they without us are dumb. I have found, besides, quite independently of any hint from my friend (as he would be glad to know), that a man can, if he will, possess this 'substantial world' in fee for ever, and can go about accompanied with great voices and powers that you could not be dispossessed of even if you finish in an alms-house or a poor-law institution : they are yours, and are you. The thing to do with riches is to house them where alone they are safe—inside the mind : there the best company will crowd out the trivial, and most worries die for lack of subjects worth worrying about.

So at least I read my friend's completed life. It was a practical sermon on Emerson's remark that 'things are in the saddle and ride mankind,' and a successful solution of Carlyle's problem of 'lessening your denominator' : an unconscious exposure of the waste and aimlessness of many human lives. His range was narrow, do you say ? But to be a master is to be a master.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

THE sea breeze freshens, and eddies twist
 The flying wisps of spray ;
 The sunset deepens to amethyst,
 Gibraltar fades in the evening mist,
 Across Gibraltar Bay.

The turbines whirl as a speed increased
 Augments their light refrain,
 'A fond farewell to the glowing feast
 Of sights and sounds in the Shiny East,
 The purple hills of Spain.'

Our forefoot lifts to the ocean swell,
 The bow waves curl in foam,
 Tarifa flashes to Cape Spartel,
 St. Vincent gleams as a sentinel,
 Upon the course for home.

The years have passed with the seasons' flow,
 The Fates their web have spun,
 For some have shone in promotion's glow
 And some are gone to their watch below,
 Their long Commission done.

But solemn musing and wistful dreams
 Are out of season now ;
 Astern the wake as a ribbon streams
 The Lizard flashes its double beams,
 Broad on the weather bow.

The grey dawn heralds the morning light,
 Ahead lies Plymouth Sound,
 The pennant flaunts in arrested flight
 Full forty fathoms of rippling white,
 And we are Homeward Bound.

S. H. RADCLIFFE.

ATHENS AND ITS LIFE TO-DAY.

BY SIR CHARLES PETRIE, Bt.

CHANGE is the dominant note of the Greek capital at the present time. The old Athens of pre-war days is in process of being transformed out of all recognition as a result of the arrival in Greece of twelve hundred thousand refugees from Asia Minor, most of whom, being townsmen, have settled in Attica in order to be near the largest centre of population in the country. A hundred years ago Athens contained a few tens of thousands of inhabitants; at the beginning of the century there were about a hundred thousand; and to-day there are more than half a million. These figures should be in the mind of every visitor as his boat draws alongside the quay at the Piræus, or when his train pulls up in the station, for they will prepare him for what he is going to find. He will see change, but assuredly not decay, on every hand.

It would be idle to pretend that this state of affairs is welcomed by all Athenians, and to many foreign Philhellenes it is peculiarly repugnant. Those who hold such views regret that when the Turkish yoke was thrown off neither Nauplia nor Corinth was made the capital, and that Athens was thus spared the dubious advantages of modernisation. It is, however, useless to indulge in regrets of this nature, for on historical and sentimental grounds Athens was predestined to be the capital of modern Greece, as Rome of modern Italy. At the same time there is no reason why the new city should not be planned in a way reminiscent of her glorious past, and it must be confessed that this has not always been the case. As one drives from the Piræus many an eyesore mars the prospect, though when the magnitude of the refugee problem is taken into account—the absorption of 1,200,000 immigrants by a nation of only 6,000,000—a few errors in town-planning are the more easily forgiven. To-day it is hardly possible to tell where Athens ends and the Piræus begins, for the buildings are uninterrupted by any stretch of open country, and the port claims to be the third in size in the Mediterranean.

Such an influx of fresh inhabitants would in itself be sufficient to account for profound social changes, but there has also been a

long period of political upheaval. During the last twenty years Greece has known three kings, two dictators, one republic, and revolutions and *coups d'état*, successful and unsuccessful, without number. Nevertheless, the foreigner will be surprised at how little, not at how much, effect these events have had upon the life of the ordinary Greek, though it would be absurd to claim that they have left so politically-minded an individual unmoved. His final reaction has been one of disgust with those who would not let him get on with his work uninterrupted, and it is this feeling which brought about the return of King George II to his throne last November.

The Restoration is bound to exercise a centripetal influence upon the social life of the capital. The old Royal Palace is a hideous building erected in the reign of King Otto in the centre of Athens, and during the republic it was converted into the Parliament-house. King George II has not reoccupied it, but lives with his brother, Prince Paul, in a smaller palace which belonged to their father when the latter was Crown Prince. The surroundings of the Court are dignified, but not ostentatious, while a dash of colour and romance is given by the picturesquely-attired Evzones who mount guard at the gate. The relatively small Royal residence of to-day, situated in a street with other houses, seems more in keeping with the practical, yet sympathetic, outlook of the present monarch than the frowning pile which housed his predecessors. The houses of several other members of the Royal Family changed hands during the republic, notably that of Prince Nicholas, father of the Duchess of Kent, which, after being a hotel for a time, is now the Italian Legation.

Nothing is being left undone to render easy the transition from republic to monarchy, and the King grants audiences without enquiring into the political antecedents of those who solicit them. He has even retained the republican Order of the Phoenix. The other Greek Orders are the Redeemer and the Order of George I, the latter, like the Royal Victorian Order, being given for special services to the Royal House. So far neither the King nor Prince Paul have had time to go out in society, but no one who has seen the reception accorded to them in the streets can doubt of their popularity with the people. It is a well-deserved recognition of the King's determination to keep the Crown above the political parties.

The long exile of the King, so much of which was spent in England, has brought him into touch with life at many points, and

has rendered him cosmopolitan in the best sense of the term. The consequence of this is already being noticed in Athens, which is far less narrow in its outlook than the capitals of many larger countries. Friends of the King from Western Europe arrive from time to time, and the Greeks are hoping that they will prove to be but the vanguard of a mighty army of foreign visitors, who will not be content merely to come ashore for a few hours from a cruising liner, as is too often the case at present, but will spend days and even weeks in the country. Another influence which is helping to make Athens less provincial than the other Balkan capitals is the air services: Imperial Airways and the Dutch K.L.M. connect it daily with both East and West, and it is now possible to breakfast in Athens and sup in London on the same day. Already the effect of this easy communication with the outside world is being felt, and both English and French are widely spoken in Athens. The latter language predominates, partly because many Greeks are educated in France, and also because the pronunciation of English is found more difficult. Yet those Greeks who do speak English speak it very well indeed.

When one talks of the cosmopolitanism of Athenian life, however, one must remember that it is as yet by no means widely extended. There is no native nobility in Greece, and the few families that have titles have received them in the past from foreign potentates, often the Doges of Venice. On the other hand, there is an aristocracy in the etymological sense of the word, which it would be impossible to praise too highly. Limited in numbers, often descended from the heroes of the War of Independence, and much intermarried, it sets an example of philanthropy and public spirit almost without parallel. The amount that is done in Greece by voluntary effort is little short of miraculous: not only, as in England, are hospitals and similar institutions erected by this means, but even roads are built. The Foreign Office was presented to the nation by one rich Greek, and the legation in Paris by another. The Benakis Museum is a third example of a munificence which it would be hard to equal elsewhere. Yet another is the Stadium, on the banks of the Ilissus, which was originally built in the fourth century B.C., was repaired by Herodus Atticus in A.D. 140, and after being largely destroyed in the Middle Ages was restored by the liberality of M. Averoff thirty years ago. The members of this aristocracy have contrived, without ceasing to be patriotic Greeks, to be equally at home in London, Paris, or Rome,

and their refining influence, reinforced now by that of the Court, is bound before long to have a broadening effect upon the whole life of the capital.

With a few exceptions, members of this upper class show no inclination to enter political life, which suffers in consequence. They work hard at their businesses, they play hard, and they are always ready to give a helping hand to their compatriots, but the Chamber has no attraction for them. This aristocracy, like that of Venice, is essentially one of commerce, and to the detriment of the nation it is confined to a few centres such as Athens, Salonika, and Patras. In the country districts there is not, as in Central and Western Europe, a resident upper class whose outlook cannot fail to influence the masses, and the peasants are untouched by those influences which are so beneficial in the larger towns.

As may be supposed, the Greek woman of position is now completely emancipated—more so than her Italian sister. In the most approved style of London and Paris she will enter the bar of the Hotel Grande Bretagne and call for a cocktail without anyone thinking the worse of her for it. Indeed, the Englishman will find the relations between the sexes in the best Athenian society more like what he knows at home than in most Continental countries. Yet this freedom is very recent, and it is still confined to a narrow circle. The peasant women of Attica can have changed but little since the days of the Turks, and among the hillsmen nothing will induce an unmarried girl even to speak to a member of the opposite sex unless some male of her family is present. By no means the least of the charms of modern Greece is that one can so soon pass from Europe of the twentieth century to Asia of the eighteenth. Old customs die hard, and especially is this the case in all that relates to death. The recent funerals of various politicians, for example, were all made the occasion for a half-holiday, and social life was largely suspended between the death and the burial of the respective individuals concerned. It was as if the Oxford Street stores closed for the funeral of Mr. Baldwin or Mr. Lansbury.

As befits the descendants of those who won Salamis the sea is a magnet to all Athenians. It is within such easy reach of the city that the shore is thronged in the summer, and the most attractive restaurants cater for all tastes and pockets. For those who can afford it there is excellent yachting, for the islands are close at hand, and the new Yacht Club is one of the most comfortable of its kind. It stands on a promontory above the Bay of Munychia,

where the triremes lay at anchor when Athens was mistress of the seas, and the narrow street by which one ascends the hill is that in which Critias met his death at the head of the Three Thousand. As one sits on the terrace of the Yacht Club, at one's feet are the ruins of the 'Long Walls,' built at the height of Athenian power by Pericles, and destroyed by the Spartans in the hour of the city's humiliation at the close of the Peloponnesian War.

It is not only the wealthy who have opportunities of enjoying themselves, for life is cheap in Athens, and amusements are no exception. The *de luxe* hotels are not expensive in comparison with their fellows elsewhere, and the cost of living for the resident is very low when judged by British standards. The Greek does not demand elaborate amusements, for he has inherited his ancestors' zest of life. He finds delight in much that the sophisticated Western European would vote a bore, and he is the happier for it. Critics declare that the Greek is too much of an individualist to adapt himself easily to the modern world, and from a political point of view there is something in this argument, but socially he is the better for this peculiarity. He amuses himself as an individual, not in the mass or as a machine. The climate renders it easy to do this at very little cost, and there are few cities where so many people know the art of real enjoyment as in Athens.

Social customs are largely governed by climatic conditions, and in the summer it is very hot. Offices and banks open early, and close about two o'clock in the afternoon, sometimes for the rest of the day, while the shops remain shut in the afternoon. The employees are thus able to go to their homes for lunch, which means a considerable saving on their weekly budget. Afternoon tea has become an Athenian habit, and the Englishman will welcome it, for whereas he will lunch about 1.15 as at home, he will not dine before nine o'clock at the earliest. As may be supposed, evening amusements begin correspondingly late, and to go to the theatre implies not retiring to bed until the early hours of the morning. Such a life, it may be observed, does not imply excessive dissipation on the part of the Athenians, but is dictated by the fact that for several months it is too hot to go to bed early. In the cooler months dinner is often taken at one of the innumerable 'taverns,' where it is easy to eat cheaply and well, while in the summer there are the open-air restaurants by the sea and in the hills, and, for those who are members, the fashionable Yacht and Golf Clubs. The proximity of the sea and the mountains renders life peculiarly

pleasant, and a bathe is not a day's excursion, but merely implies a few minutes' run in a car.

The Athenian is to-day very much what he was two thousand years ago. An English historian has written of Pericles, 'his relationship to Cleisthenes, and the enmity which existed between his house and that of Cimon, urged him to espouse the cause of democracy.' Personal and family prejudices and affinities are still the basis of political divisions, and that is one of the difficulties which the Parliamentary System in Greece will have to overcome if it is to survive. The dividing-line in the Chamber must correspond with real differences of opinion in the country if democratic institutions are not to perish. The two great parties, the Populists (once Royalists) and the Liberals (once Venizelists), have lost their *raison d'être* since the return of the King took the question of the regime out of the political arena. Latterly the division has been largely personal, and the deaths of so many prominent politicians are robbing it even of that interest. The Attic wit enables the Athenian to mock his leaders as in the days of Aristophanes, and within a few hours of the death of Venizelos, so soon after that of his enemy Condylis, the newspaper-boys were shouting through the streets, 'Meeting of Condylis and Venizelos.' The shade of Lucian must have smiled that day.

Probably this is one of the reasons among others why there is the marked reluctance, already noted, on the part of the educated Greek to enter political life. It is true that the tendency to leave politics to professional politicians is, most unfortunately, very marked in many countries at the present time, but in Greece it may, unless it is checked, prove disastrous. Unlike Italy, Germany, and Russia modern Greece seems to mistrust its young, especially in politics, and when the foreigner tries to prosecute enquiries about the attitude of the younger generation towards this problem or that he is met with an air of astonishment that it should matter what youth is thinking. Yet it is impossible to remain long in Athens without arriving at the conclusion that the young people are much more alive to the true needs of Greece than are many of their elders. The latter find it hard to forget the bitter animosities born of the struggle between King Constantine and Venizelos, and it is not easy for them to collaborate with opponents of twenty years' standing. To the young people this feud is but an evil memory, and they want to bury it for ever. Greece must beware of becoming a gerontarchy.

Perhaps the forbidding aspect of the Parliament-house has some connection with the reluctance of the young Greek to enter it; yet it is much more suited to its present uses than it was to serve as a Royal Palace. The actual Chamber is in the style of the French, with the President's desk high above the deputies, who sit in a semicircle beneath him and who speak from a *rostrum*. Each deputy has his own desk, and a light appears on it when he is required outside the Chamber. This has many advantages over the English system, but from the point of view of the deputy it is subject to the drawback that he cannot tell who wants him, and so must risk either being pestered by bores or denying himself to an influential constituent. When a division is taken the deputies record their votes in urns placed by the tribune. The Senate used to be housed in another part of the same building, but when the monarchy was restored it was abolished.

No account of Athenian life would be complete without some reference to the great monuments of antiquity that are so prominent a feature. With the Parthenon ever before his eyes, the least romantic citizen cannot but be conscious of his glorious heritage. At the foot of the Acropolis the various schools of archæology are beginning to excavate a large area which they believe will yield important results. This will involve the demolition of what is left of Turkish Athens, and there are some who frankly deplore the destruction of the old buildings of one period for the sake of the ruins of another. The problem has arisen in the same form in Rome, and not all the glories of the *Via del Impero* and the Imperial *fori* have reconciled many Romans to the disappearance of the narrow streets which were so characteristic of their city in Papal days. So it is in Athens, and the excavators are to have their way. Nor is it easy to put the other side of the case, for there are not many Greeks who wish to perpetuate the memory of the barbarians who used the Parthenon as an arsenal, and the Erechtheum as a latrine.

The pride which the Athenians take in the past of their city has not made them indifferent to its present or its future, but Greece is a poor country, and some say that too much money has been spent on public works already. One example of Greek progress in recent years is but typical of many others. For more than a generation the question of an adequate water supply for Athens and the Piræus had been under consideration, when the arrival of the refugees rendered the matter urgent. Accordingly in 1926 the

Government decided in favour of a scheme for a dam near Marathon to hold up the waters of the Charados and Varnarva rivers, and the contract was given to an American company. The dam is nearly three hundred yards long, and the reservoir holds over forty million cubic feet of water. Even if Athens were to double her present population she would still be assured of an adequate supply of water. There can be no doubt that when conditions improve there will be further development of this type, but the Greeks are traders and sailors, and shipping is still in the doldrums; while the country has to face fierce competition in respect of its principal exports, namely currants and tobacco. There are also bondholders clamouring to be paid.

Those Athenians who can afford to do so take care to make themselves acquainted with their own country to an extent which some of our fellow-countrymen, who never think of spending a holiday in England, might well imitate. Spring is the time when excursions to the Peloponnese or to the islands are made. For those who lack either the time or the inclination to go so far afield, Attica can offer many attractions. Eleusis is the goal of many, and it has the added charm for the motorist that the road connecting it with the capital possesses one of the few good surfaces in Greece. It was made during the dictatorship of General Pangalos, who was subsequently overthrown when his efforts to fix the length of ladies' skirts proved too much for the Greek sense of humour. Pangalos had a house at Eleusis, and wished to be able to reach Athens quickly in the event of trouble. The drive there is one of the most interesting in Attica, for the visitor passes not only the church at Daphnis, with its Byzantine reliefs, but also skirts the Bay of Salamis, and the foot of Mount Ægaleos, whence Xerxes watched the defeat of his navy. The temple of Demeter is a site, rather than a ruin, but modern Eleusis is a thriving town where some very excellent brandy is manufactured.

In the opposite direction Sunion is a popular drive, and will be even more so when the new road thither has been completed, for the existing one is bad even for the Balkans. Here was a splendid temple of Poseidon, whose palace was not far away in the depth of the sea near Ægæ in Eubœa, where he kept his horses with brazen hoofs and golden manes. Some of the marble pillars of this temple are still standing on a cliff three hundred feet above the sea, and it is possible to form an idea of its beauty when it was complete. Unhappily they are disfigured by the innumerable names scratched

upon them, among others that of Byron. On the way the road goes through Laurion, where were the silver-mines that contributed so much to the wealth of classical Athens. There would appear to be little life in the town to-day, though to the cinema-goer it may have an appeal as the reputed birthplace of Pola Negri.

In yet another direction is Mount Parnes, on the borders of Bœotia, and on its lower slopes excellent wine was produced even in the days of Pericles. It is thickly wooded, and the scenery is somewhat reminiscent of that in the neighbourhood of Marienbad. This, too, is a chosen resort of the Athenians, but the most popular of all is undoubtedly Kephessia, which recalls Richmond in the days of its glory. It is beautifully situated on a hill with excellent views on all sides, and the hotels and villas are set among the trees. Its inhabitants are those who can escape in summer from the heat of the capital, and a more attractive place for such a purpose it would be difficult to imagine.

One leaves Athens and Attica with the feeling that they will not much longer remain as they are. Progress has already marked Greece for its own, and the first steps in its conquest are even now visible in the capital. A few years, if all goes well, will see perfect roads, first-class hotels in the most remote districts, and the disappearance of all that recalls the day when the Crescent still waved over Attica. When that time comes the traveller who has seen Greece as she is now will have a delightful memory that none can take from him.

THE DREAM.

BY CECIL MARTIN.

I HAD a dream, strange, fantastical ; and yet, so poignantly vivid that, while it lasted, I lived as I have never lived through the reality of life. Music, my great gift, at whose shrine I have worshipped and laboured untiringly for fifty years, has never vouchsafed to me one moment of ecstasy, like unto that which flooded my soul during the brief moments that occupied my dream.

I have asked myself whence it came, how and why ? These questions I am still unable to answer ; I only know that it was as if, having searched in vain for something that was missing, that was a vital part of my very being, I had found fulfilment, utter and complete.

On this night of my strange visitation, I had reached, at the age of sixty-five, the very pinnacle of fame upon which the ambition of my youth had determined ; I had set myself a high ideal and had attained it. What more could I wish than to have achieved the fulfilment of my life's work ? I had answered myself that there was nought else to be desired, and yet—and yet ? Whence this ceaseless troubling, this tired and wandering spirit ? Wherefore this incessant yearning for that which was utterly unattainable because I could not even conceive its nature ? The restlessness of years was upon me that night. I had returned from a concert, my ears ringing with an applause that should have satisfied the keenest ambition ; but not mine, because I knew that my performance had been little more than a display of brilliant technique ; the touch of the divine was not in my music. Was it also lacking in my soul ?

Such thoughts as these were in my mind as I sat by my fireside, when sleep crept upon me, bringing with it the dream, the manner of it being thus :

I found myself once more a young man, in full enjoyment of the faculties of youth. I was seated at a piano—a full-sized Bluthner—in a room, the memory of which was deeply buried in a past, that forty years of purposeful forgetfulness had completely failed to obliterate from my mind.

It was a long, low, garret-like room, with great beams and joists across its slanting roof, and its two latticed windows looking on to a glorious orchard, and fields beyond. It was the room I had occupied during the first five years of struggle at the foot of the ladder of fame. I could only afford the one room, but it was so capacious that I was able to turn it into two, keeping the end that looked into the orchard for my beloved piano.

I was not alone. While I sat playing melody after melody as the well-loved strains flowed through my mind, Margaret, my wife, stood at the other end of the piano. I can see her now as clearly as I saw her then, her arms resting across the lid of the instrument, her hands folded, her soft brown hair ruffled and tumbling about her shoulders—she had been playing at ‘romps’ with our seven-year-old John—and an ecstasy in her dear eyes filling me with a joy that could but find expression in my music. She stood there for some while, listening, as I played her favourite melodies, until the light of day had faded from the earth. The fire had died to a deep glow, and before it, on a rug, John lay upon his back, lost in his own youthful dreams. Then, as it were, Margaret suddenly came to earth.

‘Why, David,’ she exclaimed as she came and kissed me. ‘Here we are, all in the dark and letting the fire go out!’

In a few moments the scene had changed completely; the room was cheerfully lighted, the curtains drawn across the windows, the fire crackling with all the glee and pudder of a woman gossiping over her garden wall; and Margaret was very busy indeed.

‘Now, come along, John,’ she said. ‘It’s long past bed-time!’

‘Please, mummy, not yet. I’m not tired!’ And John sat up puckering his little eyebrows, hurt and annoyed at the rude and unsympathetic awakening from his dream of glory.

‘John, darling,’ said Margaret gently, ‘you must come now. Three late nights will never do, you know.’

She had spoken with the utmost tenderness and a smile that could not fail to reach a child’s heart. I had expected, as was usually the case, that John, though still protesting that he did not want to go to bed, would nevertheless have followed Margaret quite happily to his little bedroom. But, to my surprise, for his was not a sulky nature, he remained where he was, thrusting his hands into his small pockets with an expression of almost sullen anger upon his face.

'Come along, John,' said Margaret cheerfully, not having noticed his attitude of obstinate resistance.

'Not yet, mummy,' he said firmly, but with his eyes on the ground. 'I can't come yet. I *won't* come yet!' His face flushed and he shut his little mouth tightly, glancing slyly at me out of the corners of his eyes. Margaret looked up in astonishment, for John, as a rule, was an extraordinarily docile child; his expression at that moment was one that seldom crossed his face without some very natural cause. This will never do, I thought; he must not be unreasonable.

'John,' I said, not unkindly, 'you must go to bed when you're told.'

Then he turned on me a look which I shall never forget; his round, childish eyes reproached me with having hurt him deeply, and his little mouth puckered and quivered though he did not cry. Then, as he turned away, he became once more a sullen and obstinate child, and began to shuffle towards the door. I then perceived that he was going to bed without his usual 'Good night,' and I called him back.

'Before you go to bed, John,' said I, 'you must come back here and apologise.' This was perhaps a little too severe a way to speak to him, but I did not understand his unusual attitude and I was pained that he had treated Margaret so.

Once more that look of deep offence; then he turned and went slowly out of the room without a word. (I might here mention that John's room was certainly a part of the dream, for, as I have said, I had only the one room in that house. However, as is the strange way with dreams, this did not strike me as at all extraordinary. In fact, I did not think of it until I awoke and began to ponder upon this experience.)

Margaret went out after him with a look of puzzled anxiety upon her gentle face; and I sat musing. In five minutes she returned, once more calm and smiling. She came over to me and placed her hands upon my shoulders.

'You shouldn't have been angry with him, David,' she said. 'You promised him something, and you forgot.'

'Promised him something?' cried I, astonished.

'Yes, David. The "Hobby Horse."'

Ah! Then I understood.

The 'Hobby Horse,' from Schumann's most delightful 'Scenes from Childhood,' was the one piece of music that John loved.

For him it was the embodiment of all his childish desires. A picture could not have spoken more clearly to him of the glorious irresponsibility, the ecstatic freedom of the horse-rider. It was John's ambition to be 'a soldier on horseback,' as he expressed it.

Yes, now I understood; for I had indeed promised that John should not be sent to bed without my playing him the 'Hobby Horse.' Hence his wounded look as if I had done him irretrievable wrong. I looked into Margaret's eyes; they were the eyes of her child, expectant, pleading, full of suspense, and wondering fearfully whether the yet unbroken trust in me was to be remorselessly and cruelly shattered.

Then it was that I knew I must not break my promise to John; that I must not deceive him; that if I did so, though he might forgive me, he could not forget. I pictured him in my mind with his reproachful eyes upon me, and I knew that were I to promise him anything again, my word would be received with outward calm, but inwardly with scornful distrust. It would be for John a sure step, never to be retraced, out of the trustful mind of childhood into the disillusionment, inevitable and final, of life in this world. But, is it disillusion? Is it not rather illusion itself? The child fresh from God, untouched, unhampered by evil and deceit, who places his undoubting confidence in love, is he not nearer to the truth which is eternal, than when, by slow degrees of so-called disillusionment, he begins to distrust those dear to him, to doubt even love itself?

I looked at Margaret and smiled: 'Bring him in,' I said. 'It is just like me to forget.'

She went immediately to fetch him, and presently returned leading him by the hand. His little face was flushed and tear-stained, and he glanced shyly at me as if half-expecting a further rebuke. I held out my hands to him, smiling encouragement, and he came to me at once. The next moment, his apprehension had fled, and his eyes shone with delight as I began to play the 'Hobby Horse.' I can see him now, standing beside me, his face alight with eager excitement, moving his small body to and fro with the music. I played it over twice for him, then, clapping his tiny hands, he begged me to let him hear, just once, 'The Soldier's March.' I gave him what he asked. Then John, without a protest, went straight to bed, with a smile on his little features that was not of this world.

I was sitting by the fire pondering over this episode and wishing,

as I glanced round our poor abode, that I had more comfort to give those two whom I loved, when Margaret came back into the room, having watched our little John slip happily into the land of blessed forgetfulness.

'David,' she said softly, kneeling down beside me, 'why so sad?'

'I was wishing, Margaret,' I replied, stroking her soft hair, 'that I had more to give you.'

'More to give me! Oh, David!'

She said no more than that, but the sweet earnestness of her face was in itself eloquence enough; I knew that she wanted nothing more from me than I had already given her—the sure companionship of love, the gentle intimacy of man and woman that comes not at our command, but is God's gift alone. As she looked up at me I saw the truth in her clear eyes, and I knew then, that what I had sacrificed for her was nothing in comparison with the deep unchanging joy she had brought within my heart. I thought of myself as I might have been, famous and wealthy, had I chosen to remain unfettered by the bonds of marriage, and weighing these things with the precious gift I possessed in their stead, I marvelled how love can make all else seem insignificant and worthless; how it can make a man humble and ashamed of his unworthiness, and yet can make him proud and grateful for his manhood. And wondering who was I to have been so blessed by God, there came into my mind that phrase of our great writer, Sir James Barrie: 'They that have known it have passed in and out of heaven.'

Then it was, with the suddenness of change that is the property of dreams alone, that my vision altered. Margaret was gone and I sat alone once more an old man. It was not until I had remained thus, in vague, uneasy mind for some few moments, that I realised that sleep, with the vision, had fled.

Strange indeed was such a visitation to me, for I had never married. Two gifts Heaven offered me in my youth: love and fame. I could have had them both, but love I deliberately thrust from me, knowing that in accepting it I should have to fight for fame with fettered hands and feet.

I chose my freedom. In my unconscious need of that other gift that I despised, I have violated the holy temple of man, but I have missed the sweetest thing on earth.

TRAMPS IN THE PYRENEES.

BY VERA DART.

I. ANDORRA.

THE little state of Andorra, once so remote and hidden from the world by its barrier of mountains, bids fair to become one of the most famous beauty spots in the Pyrenees. A good motoring road now runs down the main valley from north to south and, before long, who knows what atrocious buildings will spring up in its wake. As I write the country is still unspoiled. You no longer see the national costume, but nothing mars the beauty of the landscape. Peasants toil in the narrow belt of vivid green through which the river runs, clusters of ramshackle houses cling to the hillside, lovely old stone bridges span the gorge, and, perched on a rock at the most dramatic point of the valley, a rugged little church stands sentinel over the pass.

Mr. Belloc's book, *The Pyrenees*, had inspired us with the wish to walk into Andorra by the Font Argent route; at the same time the book had stressed the difficulty of finding the way and the necessity of carrying three days' provisions in case of being lost. Not being sufficiently intrepid to cope with these conditions of travel, we decided to engage a guide who would, so we hoped, carry most of our impedimenta and make us independent of maps.

We fixed on Luchon as our headquarters because it is as near to the heights as the train will go and it seemed a good starting-place. We were recommended a guide by an agency in Luchon and the manager of our hotel endorsed his character; since he plays an important part in our story, I must here introduce him. Favé was young, not tall, but square-shouldered and very muscular in build. How he kept up his strength I cannot imagine, for he hardly ever seemed to require food and, though he enjoyed a good meal when we got one, he ate surprisingly little. 'J'ai un tout petit estomac,' he explained, and no doubt this is a great blessing to one who is obliged to carry his provisions. At our preliminary interview I suggested Andorra, which I fondly imagined was almost a closed country. He laughed and said, 'All the English want to go to Andorra, it is full of them.' Nevertheless, he seemed delighted at

the idea and it was decided that we should start in three days' time, the interval to be employed by us in short expeditions to get into training and test our walking clothes.

In order to strike the Font Argent Pass, you start from Les Cabannes which is north of Andorra and follow the river Aston. Nobody at Luchon except the guide seemed to have even heard of Les Cabannes. The 'Route des Pyrénées' bus people said they could take us if, as we affirmed, it was on the road between Tarascon and Ax-les-Thermes, but we must pay return fares to Ax and must start at 8 a.m. and arrive at midday. This did not suit us at all and Favé said the road to Les Cabannes was not particularly interesting, so we decided to go by train.

We reached Cabannes in the afternoon. The inn has ceased functioning, but we found rooms opposite a restaurant. Cabannes consists of one long street and has a shopping system all its own. You buy needles from the grocer and postcards from the draper and stamps through the window of the post office after closing time, for the postmistress like everyone else is for ever gazing at the street. There is a lovely river, the Aston, which you meet directly you get clear of the village, from which the hills rise steeply on either side. The most remarkable thing we saw in Cabannes, however, was the statue in the little 'place.' This was a plump female figure nude, except for a wisp of drapery, with a kind of basin on its head. Unfortunately, the sculptor must have failed to satisfy the inhabitants of Cabannes, for someone else had evidently come along and touched it up in faint colours, the result of which was rakish in the extreme. This person had also given it black enamel boots through which its stout toes and sturdy ankles gave an effect which must be seen to be appreciated. It would be interesting to know the history of this figure, for as a public monument it is unique.

Next morning we set forth in the dark along the road and soon turned south by the river Aston. The lower part of the Aston valley is thickly wooded and although the sun had risen we could not actually see it rise, so there was nothing to distract us from the discomfort of the rucksacks and the pangs of hunger. I had asked Favé to buy the provisions, thinking he would know better than I what was the best food to walk on; however, nothing was said and we toiled on for three hours giving a marvellous exhibition of 'le phlegme britannique.' Suddenly he slipped off his sack remarking, 'You would like a banana, *n'est-ce pas*? You had nothing before starting and we shall not breakfast till eleven o'clock.' We

accepted one banana each, but it did little to fill the aching void ; however, it did give me strength to make a speech in French, explaining that in England we make a hearty meal on rising and I therefore proposed to eat at nine o'clock rather than wait until eleven. Favé made no objection, so, at nine, having walked for over four hours, we sat down by the river. The sun was now touching the peaks to gold and we had reached a higher part of the valley which here resembled one of the remoter Cumberland dales in its fresh open greenness, the river chattering over stones, the mountains on either side shutting out the world of men. Our breakfast consisted of hard-boiled eggs, dry bread (how dry I only realised when I found myself dealing with a crust for all the world like a dog gnawing a bone) and a thick slice of dark-grey meat that refused to be bitten, but had to be torn with the grain. No doubt the object of this kind of meal is to prevent you eating too much. It takes so long to consume, that at the end of half an hour, which is the usual allowance, one has really eaten very little. The Aston provided our drink and, though we heard of dysentery from drinking water, we did not suffer.

It is characteristic of the Pyrenees that the chain of mountains maintains a relatively even level and the foot-passes are higher in proportion to the peaks than is usually the case. The top of the pass is called the 'port,' derived I imagine from 'porte,' and indeed the summit of the pass often has the appearance of a doorway in the rock. The drawback to the Font Argent Pass is the extreme length of the valley before the climb to the 'port.' In spite of our early start, the midday sun found us toiling up the steepest part of the ascent which consists of a stiff slope clothed in long grass, extremely tiring at any time and really exhausting after so many hours' going. At the foot of the pass we were joined by a shepherd of eighty who, in spite of his age, not only easily led the party, but talked incessantly. He told us that he had won a prize—and mentioned the sum involved—for having had eleven children. He explained that one of the rules of the—I hardly know whether to call it competition—was that the eleven children were born before he was forty-five, but it was evidently still the peak of his life's story. He also related in detail the fortunes of his offspring, but here I confess my attention wandered, for his French could be understood only by a great effort of concentration. Having surmounted the grass slope we came to a group of mountain lakes from which a sparkling river, well named the Silver Fountain, runs down to join the Aston. Our

new friend still chatted without ceasing till eventually the guide temporarily silenced him by giving him the rest of our meat. Though the old man had no teeth, he attacked this dainty with the greatest relish and, leaving him by the lake, we climbed the last lap to the 'port' and dropped down into Andorra.

In spite of all the French and Spanish can say to decry Andorra, those who have seen it will agree that it needs no apology and no vindication. Wild mountains, narrow gorges, tumbling rivers, lakes, like many-coloured jewels from sparkling sapphire to deepest jade, what more can an ungrateful traveller hope to find. You have only to turn away from the main valley and follow any of the streams that flow into the Valira, to find peace and solitude if you desire them. If on the other hand you are bent on sight-seeing, you will visit the principal town, Andorra la Vielle. Here you will be shown the old court house in an incredible state of dirt and neglect, though it is still in use. Andorra is only nominally independent; actually it belongs to two co-princes, the Bishop of Urgel and the French Government who have inherited the rights formerly owned by the Comte de Foix. The two co-princes nominate representatives who in turn appoint officials, so that the famous Council has very little authority. Some curious customs survive. When a murder is committed, three notabilities visit the corpse and address it as follows: 'Corpse, arise! Justice demands it of Thee.' Since the corpse very naturally does not respond, it is then presumed that he is dead.

The principal industries of Andorra appear to be tobacco and postage stamps. We bought cigarettes labelled 'Lucky Strike, Pure Virginian Tobacco,' but it was common knowledge that the tobacco had been grown in the fields at our feet. When funds are getting low, the Andorrans change the postage stamps; collectors rush in and the exchequer recovers.

There is one large shop in Andorra where with patience you can buy almost anything; there is also a tennis court with an umpire's chair but no back lines; but, most remarkable of all, there is an hotel at Las Escaldas which contains no less than three bathrooms and really hot water. Las Escaldas is only a mile from Andorra la Vielle. It is a busy little place with a constant stream of mules, horses, stray dogs and peasants passing to and fro. All the life of the place is in the street and it is amusing to watch the commotion from the steps of the hotel.

It would be pleasant to spend many days exploring Andorra, but

this our itinerary did not permit. We had one perfect day up in the hills beside the Lakes of Pessons and the following day we regretfully took our leave. We were bound for Espot, which is due west of Andorra, and the guide thought we might save time by taking a 'bus down one valley and up the next. We accordingly took a 'bus from Las Escaldas over the Spanish border to Seo de Urgel.

This little town lies in a fertile plain at the foot of the Pyrenees. To the north rise tier upon tier of mountains bare of all vegetation save occasional belts of pines; to the south, across the river, are three sand-coloured hills surmounted by forts which bear such a striking resemblance to those in Morocco that I fully expected to see the black faces of Senegalese soldiers peering over the ramparts. Between these sandy wastes, the river has created a green oasis in the midst of which stands picturesque Seo with its magnificent cathedral, its narrow tortuous streets and its more modern 'rambla' or boulevard. We ceased to regret that the vagaries of Spanish motor-'buses forced us to wait a day at Seo, and indeed it is well worth a visit, both for its typically Spanish character and the austere beauty of its cathedral.

II. ROAD TRAVEL IN SPAIN.

Travellers in Spain are well aware that Spaniards are the latest risers in Europe; they refuse to have summer-time though the early morning is even more valuable in their climate than in ours, for the scorching midday sun makes work impossible. This being the attitude of the Spanish people, the time-table of their 'buses presents a complete enigma. They invariably start at 4 a.m. and they provide the only means of travel in the villages. You generally have to change at about 7 a.m. and wait several hours for your connection. It is impossible to get coffee before eight o'clock and you sit for an hour in an hotel dining-room watching the maid slap the chairs with a duster. The window is open to the fresh morning air, but unfortunately Spanish architects invariably put such sanitation as is provided outside the dining-room window, so that if you are wise you shut it on entering the room, and if not, you still shut it before long.

The 'bus from Seo took us along a wildly beautiful gorge which we could only dimly perceive in the half-light and dropped us at 7 a.m. at a little place called Artesa. Here we were to wait till

midday. Favé met a youth on the 'bus whom he introduced with pride as the nephew of the Mayor of Venasque, and this gentleman recommended an hotel for breakfast where we waited for an hour as described above. The Mayor's nephew did not join us, and Favé said he had taken a room and gone to bed; he was evidently an experienced 'bus traveller and knew the ins and outs of the game. We sat on, listening to Favé's opinion of the Spaniards, till all the chairs had been slapped and the floor mopped. We were encouraged by a maid who came with plates and cups. Vain hope! No sign of coffee. The maid informed us there was to be a fête in Artesa that day; perhaps in preparation for this, a woman in the passage was cleaning knives with great vigour. At long last, coffee and milk arrived and three of the largest slices of bread I ever hope to see; each slice was the size of a small oval meat dish and about an inch and a half thick. Butter we received as a matter of course, not realising what a luxury it is in villages. We never saw a whole loaf of bread in this country and I doubt if anyone except the baker ever did. It seems to be sold in chunks measuring a yard or so long and of varying girth.

After breakfast we wandered round the little place and tried to find shade by a stream, but were driven away by mosquitoes; we eventually found that the shady side of the main street was the only possible resting-place, so we braved the stares of the populace and ordered vermouth and soda. Two men at the next table were dipping olives into their vermouth; we ordered some and found that they were stuffed with a very good mixture of anchovy; this refreshment was excellent and most heartening. When the 'bus appeared about twenty minutes late it was packed to the doors, but we were told that a relief 'bus would come shortly and we were much encouraged to find that the Mayor of Venasque's nephew (who had reappeared looking very trim and smart) was going in the same direction as ourselves. Such a distinguished passenger, we felt, would not be left in the lurch.

It was amusing to watch the crowds of people who had turned out for the fête. We were very concerned to see a girl with a double bass apparently waiting for the 'bus—it seemed hardly fair either to the instrument or to the other passengers—however, it turned out that she was only holding it for the owner who was having a drink before joining the rest of the band who were making ready to play. A spirited tune was struck up and the girls and boys joined hands and danced in rings in the street. Their clasped

hands were held up so that their elbows were almost touching and their feet fairly twinkled in the complicated steps of the dance. In the middle of the largest ring was a tiny circle of very small children hopping about to their hearts' content. The dancers were quite oblivious of the blazing sun or indeed of anything else. A car which appeared soon after the dance had begun made no attempt to get through, but waited a good fifteen minutes till the band ceased playing. It was now well after one o'clock and it seemed as though we might as well eat our lunch. We decided to make one more effort about the 'bus and this time addressed a policeman—Would the 'bus soon come?—Yes, indeed! it would be along immediately—Should we have time to lunch first?—Of course we should, there was no hurry at all.

Perhaps one of the reasons why Spaniards are so courteous is that they do not know the meaning of hurry; their time and attention are at your disposal indefinitely. There is no such thing as being late for an engagement, since nobody minds when you arrive. There remains the mystery of the 4 a.m. motor-'bus and the most probable solution appears to be this. The travellers do not get up at 3.30 a.m., they simply do not go to bed, for they know that before long the 'bus will break down or turn them out and then there will be time enough to sleep.

At 2.30 the 'bus actually arrived and we all clambered in, about forty strong. The Mayor's nephew had disappeared at the critical moment and it seemed as though he would be crowded out, but he was eventually accommodated in the first class, though in the previous stage he had been travelling second. These little niceties of class are seldom insisted on beyond the first few miles. It was extremely hot and no sooner had the passengers taken their seats than they began to filter out and in again in the traditional manner. Our section was handicapped by two old women who insisted on sitting next the door and refused to move, with the result that the other passengers had to perform gymnastic feats in order to get out; not that this deterred them. One of the old women proceeded to make a hearty meal. She had brought in a saucepan an omelette, meat and vegetables, also half a loaf of bread, a bottle of wine and a thermos flask.

After nearly an hour's wait, the passengers began to settle themselves and there was a general feeling of hope in the air, as though we really should start before long. At this point, an old priest appeared and began anxiously looking in the 'bus for something

he had lost. It was quite impossible to make anything like an adequate search now that the 'bus was full (as Favé said, 'Cela complique les choses'); but the passengers did what they could to help the old gentleman and presently he unearthed a little cardboard cover. Great interest was evinced by everyone at this find and equally great concern that the medicine bottle which it should have contained was nowhere to be seen. At 3.30 we actually started and tore along at a pace that set all the babies crying loudly. We distributed biscuits with great success to the nearest baby, who became a reformed character and crowed cheerfully for the rest of the trip. After two or three hours' travel a shout of triumph went up from one of the old women who had put her hand down the seat cushions and had found the priest's medicine bottle intact. General rejoicing and congratulations to the delighted owner!

We were skirting the foothills of the Pyrenees before reaching the valley which would lead us back into the mountains. The final ridge which divided us from the valley had to be surmounted and, while I live, I shall never forget the pace at which we descended that hill. I am prepared to swear that no ordinary private car could have rounded the hairpin bends at the speed at which we took them without overturning. Nothing but the length of the coach kept it on the road, and nothing but the complete absence of traffic saved us from a head-on crash. The passengers enjoyed it all hugely; they hung on to the upright poles in the 'bus or were flung from side to side shrieking with laughter as if it were a fun fair. Though we were three and a half hours late in starting, the driver and conductor refreshed themselves at each stopping-place and seasoned travellers, like the Mayor's nephew, got out and strolled about. There was a notice in the 'bus prohibiting smoking and the only people who disregarded this were the driver and a policeman.

We arrived in due course at a place where we were to change. The connecting 'bus had gone, but this problem was solved by making our driver take our 'bus right through. We were to alight at a point half-way between Escalo and Esterri in the Val d'Aran and walk six miles to Espot, which was our destination. We found, however, that the Espot hotel now boasted a car and this vehicle had been sent to meet us. It was now nine o'clock and quite dark. The car was packed with six people, bags, suitcases, crates of soda-water syphons and innumerable sacks, one of which was loaded on the wing. Off we started, but alas! in less than five minutes the car jibbed and no amount of effort could persuade her to restart.

After so much knocking about, we felt a six-mile walk in the moonlight would be quite refreshing. The driver insisted on borrowing a bicycle and going to Esterri to fetch a taxi, so leaving Favé to look after our things and transfer them to the taxi, Leila and I started walking up a most glorious valley, the moon shining on the river and on the rocks and on the white road we were to take. We had walked about a mile when there was a sudden challenge out of the darkness. 'Halt!' 'Dos Inglese,' I said firmly (being the only Spanish words I knew), and a torch showed the familiar uniform of two Guardia Civil. They seemed satisfied and fortunately did not ask for passports which we had left in the rucksacks. They indicated the road to Espot which at this point branched to the right and mounted a hill in a series of hairpin bends. We were practically at the top of the hill when the taxi overtook us and we reached the hotel just before eleven. It was quite a clean and hospitable inn and gave us an excellent dinner. The dining-room staff had gone to bed and we were waited on by a dreadful little slattern of most unprepossessing appearance who flirted outrageously with the guide, till finally he remarked to us, 'Je vois bien que celle-ci va me faire tromper ma femme.' To which the only possible reply seemed to be: 'Chacun à son goût.'

III. FROM ENCHANTMENT TO PERDITION.

Our departure from Espot was chiefly remarkable for not taking place at crack of dawn. The only possible lodging for the following night was a large rock which was described by our guide in glowing terms. It appeared that the rock projected overhead and was rain- and wind-proof; we should be extremely comfortable and not at all cold, for he would light a fire. The only drawback to this rock was its situation which was but three hours' walk from Espot and a very long way from our next halting-place; however, such rocks are not to be found on every hillside and we should have a gloriously slack afternoon by the lake of St. Maurice. We were each to carry a blanket borrowed from the hotel and a 'camarade' who would be passing the following day would bring them back for us.

By the time we were ready to start, a party of ladies turned up who were going in the same direction as ourselves. They were escorted by a young man with an orange-coloured bandana knotted round his head who looked as if he had stepped out of the chorus

of 'The Maid of the Mountains.' He had a rucksack, but he insisted on carrying our two blankets and, making nothing of their weight, he leapt up the mountain-path singing blithely. This was a great piece of luck, for a blanket is an inconvenient addition to the rucksack and the path was steep. Having performed this kindly act, the young man drifted off with his party and we saw them no more.

At midday we arrived at one of the most beautiful lakes I have ever seen. High up in the Encantadas (Enchanted Mountains), surrounded with dazzling verdure and dark pines, it would be impossible to imagine a lovelier setting. The twin peaks of the Encantadas are diagonal rather than vertical in contour and this gives them a marvellous wind-swept rhythm, like the draperies in Greek statuary. At the junction of the two peaks are two individual rocks that look like figures and it is easy to understand the popular superstition that these mountains are haunted. All round the lake are other peaks, some near and others melting into the distance, and, when one tires of gazing on the sublime, one's eyes come to rest on the little river which runs out of the lake babbling cheerfully, its green banks striking a pastoral note amid this awe-inspiring grandeur.

We picknicked by the lake and then heard a shout from the other side. Favé was very excited over this. 'C'est mon camarade je vais a son rencontre.' We said he could go on and we would follow slowly round the lake. At the far end were two tiny tents in which we had taken little interest. We now learned that some French people were camping there and Favé's 'camarade' was their guide. He gave us a message to the effect that they had invited us to supper and were looking forward to meeting us, so we duly put in an appearance. They were perfectly charming and had often been in England though they did not speak English. We were happily gossiping and the lady was stirring something that smelt very good in an enormous saucepan when it actually began to rain, the first rain we had seen in the Pyrenees. We fled for shelter to our rock and watched a thunderstorm that lasted over an hour. The changes of cloud shadows on lake and mountain were most lovely and our rock was as weather-proof as Favé had described it. What we should have done had the wind blown from the opposite quarter, I tremble to think. Owing to the rain, it became colder and the guides lit an enormous fire at one end of the rock, feeding it with pine logs, thus supplying the one touch

that had been lacking to make it Brünnhilde's rock out of *Die Walküre*.

The storm obligingly ceased before supper-time and we descended to enjoy the hospitality of our new friends. They probably saved our lives, for we were given a hot meal which finished with rum punch, so that we were thoroughly warm by the time we clambered up the hillside to our rocky couch. The guides had collected straw which had been left by a camping party and a ground-sheet had been lent by our friends. We were to have all three blankets over us and Favé would share a down quilt with his comrade.

Readers of Mr. Belloc's book, *The Pyrenees*, will remember that he recommends walkers to choose a rock for their night's shelter rather than a hut. From this I gather that he has not been obliged to lie all night with another man's head on his feet. Considering the amount of straw that had been spread, it was reassuring to find that the guides were to sleep in front of the fire, but, since the rock was about a foot shorter than our combined heights, no doubt they thought that by pinioning our feet they would avoid bruises on the head. The discomfort of this arrangement can better be imagined than described. Had we been Walküre of operatic proportions we might have been tolerably comfortable, but this kind of camping is emphatically not to be recommended to the tall and thin. We consoled ourselves as best we might with a wonderful view of stars and an occasional gleam of moonlight on the lake.

Next morning we climbed a steep pass with many a backward look at the lake and descended the valley of St. Nicholas. We passed a chain of lakes and breakfasted near the first one, which was the prettiest. After this, the valley gradually became narrower and less interesting and the path broadened into a mule-track made of loose stones, cruelly hard on the feet. Favé was uncertain how far it was to Castelljon, the place which we hoped to reach for the night, but about two o'clock we came to a village called Bohi, and, having walked for six hours, not counting our halt, we went to the inn in search of food. The entrance, as usual in these places, consisted of a barn full of sacks. There was a very dark room leading out of it in which some men were eating, but we were taken upstairs to a fairly clean room where we waited an hour while food was prepared. It consisted mainly of soup and vegetables including some dangerous-looking mushrooms that our guide had picked on the way. The landlady assured us that they were poisonous, but Favé, treating us to another harangue on the ignor-

ance of the Spaniards, insisted that they be cooked and we ate them with impunity.

I was in favour of hiring mules for the next stage to help us over the stones, but there were none to be had at Bohi, so there was nothing for it but to tramp another four hours to Villaje. By that time it would be dark, but we might there hire mules who do not mind the dark for the remaining three hours to Castelljon. The path from Bohi to Villaje was more interesting and led us over the shoulder of a mountain with a magnificent panorama of distant hills and flying clouds tinted by the evening light. It was growing rapidly dark as we descended and it seemed most unlikely that we should get beyond Villaje. The guide assured us that it was quite usual to spend the night on a mule. We should be sitting, he explained, in a kind of armchair on the mule's back and could sleep in perfect comfort. I can't say that the idea of a mule instead of a bed roused us to any enthusiasm—we felt that if you really want to enjoy the luxury of a night on a mule, it is a mistake to spend the previous night under a rock—however, when we reached Villaje the question was decided by the muleteer, who flatly refused to go. It appeared that it was five hours to Castelljon and his mules had to be at work the next day. We had walked not less than fifty kilometres (over thirty miles) on top of an almost sleepless night, so it was obvious that we must accept whatever hospitality we could find at Villaje.

This was of the most unpromising description. Upon entering the barn which formed the ground floor of the inn, we found it inhabited by a pig. There was nothing to prevent this animal from coming upstairs, but it was apparently prejudiced against stair-climbing and preferred to remain below. We mounted to the dining-room and our hearts sank. Against a filthy wall was a long table covered with greasy oilcloth and a mass of crumbs and flies. Dirty children crawled over the floor, crying loudly. All the village had assembled to stare at us, but the only clean face to be seen was the smiling countenance of a priest who lived at this inn. The landlady brought vermouth and olives and we had some grapes with us. She also produced a piece of what she called sausage that looked for all the world like a knot of wood. We were not hungry, but I confess I was somewhat depressed. Leila was in wonderful spirits and was conducting a complicated business deal with the priest for cigarettes which he wanted to give her and which she was equally determined to pay for.

Eventually the dreaded moment could no longer be postponed. We were taken to a large guest chamber with two alcoves behind thick lace curtains. Each alcove contained a very large bed which looked surprisingly clean. On the wall of the room hung an alarming picture representing the Madonna and Child in a yellow patch of light, while below them, in red flames, a number of figures, including an old man with a white beard, writhed in torment. With an uncomfortable feeling that this might be prophetic, we retired to bed.

IV. THE END OF THE JOURNEY.

The night at the inn at Villaje was passed with no ill effects so far as we were concerned. How we were spared remains a mystery, for the unfortunate guide assured us that he woke up with creatures crawling over his face and he spent the rest of the night sitting up and smoking in self-defence. In the morning he found that rats had eaten the hems of his trousers.

The distance from Villaje to Castelljon, which according to our original information was three hours' walk, was now declared to be not less than seven hours. Two men who were going part of the way volunteered to show us a short cut. One was a gentleman in a grey lounge suit and checked cap who carried a large umbrella which he unfurled as a protection against the sun. We were surprised throughout the Pyrenees to notice the popularity of the umbrella; shepherds always carry a large one and camp under it in wet weather and it even figures in the Andorran coat of arms. Our companions were going for a week's cure to a watering-place and the umbrella constituted the whole of their luggage. The 'short cut' consisted in ignoring the zigzags by which our path ascended the hill and climbing it perpendicularly. This was extremely hot work though it had the merit of avoiding the stones on the track. At the top of the steepest bit, our leader noticed a tree with one apple left on it. The three men thereupon could not resist throwing stones at it, though it was quite obvious that a hit would knock it over a wall into a field. We thankfully rested while they displayed their skill. After several tries, the gentleman with the umbrella eventually broke the twig and of course sent the apple rolling miles down the hill. We all applauded this feat, though for our part rather half-heartedly, for naturally it was the signal for us to go on.

We were in the foothills bordering on the Pyrenees, the slopes of which were for the most part pasture covered with autumn crocus. The villages in this part of the country are built like forts, the houses closely packed round the little church in the centre. Very picturesque they are in the distance clinging to the hillside, many of them no bigger than the hut circles one sees on Dartmoor. We never saw a straggling village; no doubt the compact plan was originally for defence either against man or beast. At the top of the second ridge, we halted for a meal by the side of a stream and parted from our companions whose road here diverged from ours. We were still rather tired after our thirty miles the previous day and I again suggested mules at the next opportunity.

We soon came to a village called Las Paoles situated on the top of the ridge commanding a delightful view of green farmlands and distant hills. Mules were not available, but a farmer, wishing no doubt to make up for this deficiency, asked us into his house and gave us excellent wine, nuts and a kind of stale sponge cake with holes in it. In the kitchen were two women and a girl. Our host who spoke French explained with pride that this was his daughter who had just had her first baby. A withered old crone with a black handkerchief tied round her head was introduced as the 'sage femme' who had attended the birth. It was explained that she had never been trained in any way, but we were assured that she was so gifted that training was quite superfluous. We asked to see the 'nouveau né,' and he was brought down, his little crumpled face surmounted by an enormous bonnet made of countless layers of thick ruched ribbon. We seized the opportunity to make some return for their hospitality that would not give offence and pressed upon the young mother a trifle with which to buy a little frock or coat as a birthday present to the baby. The 'sage femme' was following this closely, and I only hope she did not pounce upon our small gift, the moment our backs were turned.

Feeling much heartened by our kind reception we resumed our hot and stony way to Castelljon, which we reached in the late afternoon. This little market town lies in a most lovely valley and has a nice broad street quite unlike the villages we had passed. The inn was beautifully clean and provided an excellent dinner, after which we were treated to a liqueur from Montserrat by an old gentleman who said he had been in England. We were also presented with a copy of *The National Geographical Magazine* by

the local vet., a charming person who had been laboriously teaching himself English and was delighted to practise on us.

We were nearing the end of the tour and our last walk was to be from Ordessa in the Arazas valley over the Brèche de Roland to Gavarnie, from whence we could take a train back to Luchon. It seemed that in order to get to Ordessa we must once more take a 'bus which of course left Castelljon at 4 a.m., but this time we actually had coffee before starting. Favé was rather vague about the route, but he talked a great deal about a place called Grauss which seemed to be of some importance. About 7 a.m. we arrived at this place and, since further information as to transport was extremely vague, we decided to try and hire a car. We found a very good car, quite new, which took us to Ordessa, but we shall always remember Grauss as the place where our modest purchase of one stamp was carefully wrapped in paper by the postmaster before being handed to us.

The Arazas valley is quite unlike most of the Pyrenean valleys. The mountains here are gigantic cliffs and huge fortresses, more impressive than beautiful. This district forms part of a National Park in which hunting and shooting are forbidden. Outside the inn at Ordessa is a depressed-looking stuffed animal, a kind of chamois, said to be the last of its particular breed; this, no doubt, accounts for its attitude of deep dejection. The day after our arrival at Ordessa the weather broke; sheets of rain descended, the hills were blotted out, and the depressed chamois was huddled up in sacks. Fortunately we were at a very comfortable inn kept by people who did not grudge a fire. Though it was only a tiny place the guests were of four different nationalities: English, French, Spanish and German. The Spaniards and the Germans departed soon after breakfast, leaving the rest of us prowling unhappily about as is the custom of walkers deprived of their exercise. We were all gazing gloomily out of the window when a pony galloped by, carrying a man with a large open umbrella. This exhibition of horsemanship raised our spirits considerably and the French people were sufficiently heartened to ask for a pack of cards.

We intended crossing the mountains to Gavarnie by the famous Brèche de Roland. You must know that Roland, the hero of Charlemagne's campaign against the Moors, was the first 'alpinist.' On one occasion he was lost in the mountains and, completely exhausted, lay down to die. Fearing that his sword might fall into infidel hands, he dashed it against the rock, but the Christian's

sword was mightier than the hard rock and cleft it asunder, making a breach which disclosed to Roland the descent to the French plains.

A wet day in the Pyrenees does not indicate a permanent break in the weather. The next day was glorious and we started soon after five, joining forces with the French party of four and their guide. The great excitement about the climb was that we had to pass what are known as 'crampons.' These are iron stakes driven into the rock, giving hand and foothold where there would otherwise be none. If any of us were nervous about this, the two guides could take one across at a time while the others waited. Actually this place was only a few yards long and did not present any serious difficulty, though it would be foolish for a novice to attempt it without a guide. As we began to climb, the rising sun climbed with us, touching rock and peak, making them glow in turn against the sky. At the top of the first waterfall was a comparatively flat 'jasse' or basin which we crossed, then up again, every hundred feet revealing more and more ridges on the horizon. The cliffs that had frowned on us when we were in the valley were now seen to be buttresses of mountains the peaks of which became gradually visible as we ascended. High above us, blocking the way to Luchon, was the giant mass of the Mont Perdu. Before the last pull to the 'port' or summit of the pass, we crossed another green 'jasse,' and at this altitude of over eight thousand feet, a flock of several hundred sheep were feeding. We lunched in hot sun before crossing the 'port' and, if any of us had felt any qualms over the route, we were more than rewarded by the magnificent panorama before our eyes. The sky vied with the mountains in beauty and little white clouds of softest down danced on the ridges, like snow fairies into whose realm we had wandered. The 'port' here is very characteristic, like a huge gateway in the rock; we crossed it from south to north and came to a long drift of snow. After negotiating two snow slopes, we found ourselves on the top of a cliff that forms part of the Cirque de Gavarnie.

A feature of the Pyrenees, seen from the French side, is the formation called 'cirque,' which consists of a huge semicircle of mountains forming a gigantic amphitheatre; the Cirque de Gavarnie is one of the most famous. We proceeded down the face of it by a zigzag path and arrived at Gavarnie itself, the most trippery place in the Pyrenees.

We had descended in a few short hours from the sublime to the ridiculous. People of all ages and sizes were to be seen mounting

ponies and mules with the aid of step-ladders and being carried to the foot of the mountains. It was indeed good-bye to mountain solitude, to the simple life, to adventure, to all that had made our tour unusual and fascinating. Good-bye, rocky peaks and smiling valleys, lonely lakes and rushing rivers; good-bye, kindly farmers and garrulous shepherds. Good-bye, Spain, land of sunshine, your charm more than compensates for your vagaries. Good-bye—good-bye— But Favé will have none of this sentimental leave-taking. Already he is planning a tour for next summer, for we have not, he assures us, seen the best of the mountains; this year the valleys, next year the heights. No regrets then, for we have stored up sunshine and laughter with which to cheer many a dull winter's day, and another summer will assuredly see us back again, drawn by the magic of the Pyrenees.

TO-NIGHT, UNSUNG.

TO-NIGHT, unsung the moon must shine,

Unkept, the misted stars, the deep

Unrhymed, beat on the horizon-line,

Unwatched, the valleys sleep;

Unread, the silvery runes of night,

And midnight candle, still unburned,

Must weave a shadowy flame to light

The pillows of love, unturned.

ETHEL ANDERSON.

Turramurra, New South Wales.

WALKING—AND SOME OF ITS FAMOUS VOTARIES.

BY JAMES KERR.

THE first three decades of the twentieth century might very appropriately be termed 'the speed age.' It requires an Indian mystic like Tagore to tell us what we are losing in this frantic rush after wealth, fame, position, pleasure. A blend of the Oriental and the Occidental might very well constitute the ideal atmosphere in which to live, move, and have one's being. But are signs not appearing now, that the pendulum is commencing its backward swing, and that we are beginning, dimly yet of course, to perceive that true wisdom lies in 'making haste slowly.'

It may not seem of tremendous import, but possibly nothing is more reassuring in this respect, than the present-day revival of the ancient art of walking. By this, I do not mean simply walking a few city blocks, in preference to taking the street car, or walking instead of motoring to the railway station, to catch the morning train to town—but walking, tramping, hiking, call it by whatever name you like, for the sheer joy and love of it. In Britain, this renaissance has been very marked for some years past, and it is now spreading over our Western Continent also. Residing as I do on the British Columbia Coast, it is my good fortune to see every week-end, the year through, groups of young men and women (and some older ones too) heading for the trail, leading to some mountain cabin or other, and thereby laying up a store of health and vitality for the week, whether spent in the university, school, business office, or elsewhere.

There are two distinct classes of hikers or walkers—those who fare forth for the day, turning their faces homeward at night-fall; and the others, who might be termed the advance guard in the Movement, who take to the road for a week or two, and even longer, at a stretch. This class, as we know, is being encouraged in England and Scotland, by the establishment of hostels, conducted on a simple scale, in parts of the country, away from the main roads, and inaccessible to ordinary vehicular traffic. These hostels provide bed and breakfast at a modest charge, as well as affording facilities for doing one's own cooking, should one be

so minded; and the number of such places is being increased yearly.

Walking has always had its distinguished votaries, and we are in good company when we take it up. In Trevelyan's *Clio*, the reader can almost literally feel the wind on his face. Carlyle was an untiring walker, and he often went alone in the silence of the moors and the hills. Starting forth on one occasion, in the early dawn, from Muirkirk in Ayrshire, he made his way through the heather of the Lowther Hills, reaching Dumfries, late in the evening—a good four-and-fifty miles. Wordsworth, residing in the mountainous Lake District of England, was also an inveterate walker. His friend, De Quincey, held that with these identical legs, Wordsworth must have traversed a distance that would have taken him seven times around the world, adding that to this mode of exercise, 'he was indebted for a life of unclouded happiness, and we, for much of what is most excellent in his writings.' The countrymen of Wordsworth have ever been noted for mountain-climbing. James Bryce may stand as a type of these, whether he was striding up Mount Ararat, making the summit of the Basuto Hills, or threading the trails of the New Hampshire uplands. Hudson also holds a high place among famous walkers. The hills, moors and beechwoods of England, and the stern reaches of Cornwall live and breathe in his books. Emerson's Monadnock is notable, but Thoreau might be reckoned the very best of our American walkers, and the worthiest recorder of the enduring worth of walking. His wandering through the White Mountains breathes the very spirit of the ancient hills. The pilgrimage along Cape Cod and the ascent of Katahdin are both deeply interesting. Even more characteristic of his spirit are the walks about his own Concord, for which he has wrought an enduring monument.

There are various *schools* of walking. One school is that of the road-walkers who may be termed 'the Puritans of the religion,' yet they number at least two poets among them, and Stevenson is their chief bard:

'Boldly he sings, to the merry tune he marches.'

Of the many poets who were walkers, it is however difficult to judge how many were road-walkers. Shakespeare seemed to prefer the footpath way, with stiles, to either the high road or the moor. Wordsworth preferred the lower fell tracks, above the high roads and below the tops of the hills. Shelley, we can easily think of,

as bursting over or through all obstacles cross-country; he used to roam at large over Shotover and in the Pisan forest. Coleridge is known to have walked alone over Scafell, but he also seems to have experienced something of the sensations of night-walking on roads:

‘Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round, walks on
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.’

Keats, Matthew Arnold, and Meredith were ‘mixed walkers’—on and off the road. It is somewhat remarkable that Edward Bowen, who wrote the Harrow Songs, left no walking songs, though he himself was the king of the roads.

The road-walkers may be said to have grasped but one part of the truth. The road is invaluable for space and swing, and the ideal walk necessitates a smooth surface for a considerable part of the way. On the other hand, the sweet beauties of nature are unveiled only to the cross-country walker. On the road we never meet ‘the moving accidents by flood or field’; the sudden glory of a woodland glade; the old farmhouse sequestered deep in rural solitude; the deep, slow-flowing stream, that we must jump, or wander along to find the bridge; the autumnal dew on the bracken and heather, and the blue smoke curling upwards from the cottage, in the quiet of the early dawn. These and a thousand other chances are the very heart and essence of walking, but they do not belong to the road. In the ideal walk, the hard road plays its own part, generally at the beginning and at the end.

In starting out on a real hiking *trip*, there is of course the physical side to think of. Food, equipment, care of health have all to be considered, but these things you teach yourself. For the rest, Nature becomes your teacher, and from her you will learn who you are, and what is your special quest in life, and whither you should go. You relax in the presence of the great healer and teacher, you turn your back on civilisation, and most of what you have learned in schools and colleges. Your intellectual sustenance is manna, vouchsafed to you daily, miraculously. You hold your hands for hidden gifts, you listen with new zest to the song of the birds, and the murmuring song of trees and streams.

From day to day you keep your log, and you may look on it at first as a mere record of travel, but something else cannot fail to be entering into it, and you will soon have the inborn realisation that you are gradually becoming an artist in life; you are experiencing the real delights of the age-old art of walking, and that it is giving you an artist's joy in creation. Don't fall down on your note-taking. It may become precious to you later on. A thought recorded, one that is essentially your own, written down on the day when it occurred, is a mental snapshot, and who knows, it may prove to be the corner-stone of an edifice you may build later. Then there are the 'far-ben' thoughts, recorded, but intended for no other eyes. These may turn out to be healing balm some day when life's sky appears drear.

In one of his essays, Hazlitt remarks—'One of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey, but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room; but out-of-doors, nature is company enough for me. Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road (mark you, *winding*) before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I shout for joy.' On the other hand, says Sterne—'Give me a companion by the way, be it only to mention how the shadows lengthen as the sun declines.'

In a general way, the consensus of opinion is in favour of companionship, and there is possibly no greater test of friendship than in going on a walking-tour together. You discern in one another all the egoisms and selfishnesses you possess. But there are rewards. If you do not quarrel and part on the road, you will find your friendship greatly deepened by the experience of the wilds together. Tramping together makes you self-revelatory. You comment on nature, books, people, but almost inevitably you talk of yourself. If it happens to be camping out at nights, there is a time of great confidence after the camp-fire has been lit, the coffee brewed, the sleeping-place laid out. You sit by the embers of the fire, as the twilight deepens and the stars come out. This is *the time* of confidences.

The chief urge of the wander-spirit is curiosity—the desire to know what is beyond the next turning of the road. Like the prospector for gold, the born wanderer is always expecting to come upon something very wonderful—just beyond the horizon's rim. Going on and on, in a line of route, has its drawbacks. Some-

one has said that 'the world is not a straight line, not even a crooked line, but an area, a great broad surface.' Similarly, life may be described as being not a chain of units, but an area spreading out from a hidden centre. So in making a halt for a day or two, in my journeyings, in order the better to study my surroundings, I have not ceased living, merely because I have ceased going forward. Halting-places invariably form a pleasant and a profitable 'break.'

Never start on a walking-tour without an author whom you love. On such a tour, it is clear that one cannot carry many books; as Stephen Graham, that indefatigable traveller in many lands, puts it: 'You could not well take the volumes of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, even were you so disposed.' One or possibly two favourite books should, however, be taken. Under the new conditions, you will come into a deeper and more intimate kinship with the book and its author, than could be obtained otherwise. For example—for a little while after supper of an evening, you may be in the seventh heaven, with a scene of *Henry IV*, a chapter of Carlyle, the incisive witticisms of Doctor Johnson, or your own favourite novelist. Their wit and poetry acquire an added richness from your then condition, and that evening they seem to surpass themselves. Then after laying down the volume, go out and watch the stars.

Even if only in a small measure, the hiker is a pilgrim. His adventure is a spiritual adventure, or it is nothing. It has often been remarked that nothing in the present ever seems so good as that which is past, and this experience comes to us all at times. Some years pass, and a *present* which is silver to-day, becomes golden in retrospect. It may be that you lie down in a matter-of-fact mood, to sleep under the canopy of the stars, on the broad plains, or in the heart of the mountains; you may ask for nothing beyond a good night's sleep. But perhaps years later, you look back with a sigh, and say: 'How wonderful it was; I was happy then.' Yet despite the passage of the years, why should the earlier experience not be an oft-recurrent one? Let us catch the spirit of renascence, as Nature comes to meet us in joyous robes, and with beckoning gestures. Let us exult and sing with Browning:

'Morning's at seven;—
All's right with the world.'

And to quote a poet of to-day :

‘ So follow the road over the hilltops and down,
There’ll be meadow and bushland and ridges of brown,
There’ll be dawns when the earth is a-quiver with light,
There’ll be friendship and laughter and camp-fires at night,
The shine of a mountain, the gleam of a sail,
And home like a star—at the end of the trail.’

Vancouver, B.C.

THE LOVER AND THE POET.

‘ WHAT have I done,’ the Lover cried—

—Love is so seldom wise—

‘ That other men should dwell on Earth,

And I—in Paradise !’

‘ What have I done,’ the Lover cried—

—Love had not served him well—

‘ That other men should dwell on Earth,

And I, in deepest Hell !’

Yet from this little Lover’s soul,

So lonely, so forlorn,

His rapture, and his agony,

A Poet’s soul was born.

E. M. HIVES.

MR. CASSIDY AGAIN.¹

BY GERALD FITZGERALD.

UNLESS one goes forth and catches them for one's self, fish, in the west of Ireland, are generally very difficult to procure. It was therefore with considerable pleasure and surprise that, on coming in to lunch one warm August afternoon, I saw my wife Phillida standing with obvious pleasure before a generous centre cut of a magnificent salmon.

'Splendid, my dear,' I said, 'how on earth did you get it? I thought they were unobtainable. Anyhow the price must have been——'

'Oh, you needn't worry about the price, George,' she answered calmly; 'this is part of a presentation salmon, a good fifteen pounds too.'

'Who on earth gave us that?' I queried; 'was it as a gift, a bribe, or conscience money?'

'A gift I should say, dear. Your friend Mr. Cassidy brought it up this morning. I met him on the avenue.'

'Corny the cute,' said I. 'How the deuce did he come by a salmon? Clever as he is, and wicked as he undoubtedly is, I never thought poaching was in his line. Besides, the only place near here where there are any salmon is the Carna river and there's nearly a water-bailiff to every yard of it, it's so full of fish. That kind of thing isn't Corny's method at all. Brains off stage is his plan. The power in the background.'

'I asked him,' said Phillida, 'but though he was very affable he evaded the point, so I thanked him and left it at that. Thank him again if you see him, George.'

'I certainly shall see him,' I answered; 'good as this salmon certainly is, I imagine the way Corny got hold of it is even better. I'll go down and look him up to-morrow.'

Fate however intervened in the shape of an urgent business letter from my Dublin solicitors which necessitated my leaving Carna that night, and it was not until near the end of the following week that I was able to shake the dust of the city off my feet and come home.

¹ 'Mr. Cassidy' first appeared in CORNHILL in April, 1936.

'Well, dear,' said Phillida, when, our greetings over and the Dublin business discussed, we were able to turn our minds to home affairs, 'such a lot has been going on in Carna since your departure. It's funny we didn't hear before you left, but news reaches us slowly. It seems that the day before you left, on the holiday, someone was drowned, or is supposed to have been drowned in the big pool below Carna bridge, and late that night Peggy Farrell and another girl saw his ghost and heard it screaming. The whole district is full of it and no one will go near Carna bridge after dark alone.'

'I wonder what the truth of the yarn is,' I said. 'I'll go down and see Corny to-morrow. He might know, and anyhow I want to hear about that salmon.'

On the following afternoon I strolled down to Corny. I found him sitting on the wall of his pig-sty, peacefully smoking and watching the feeding of his old sow.

'Good day, Corny,' I hailed him. 'How are things with you?'

'Badly, Master George, badly. I'm hard put to feed my little pig.'

'Well, Corny, I've come down to thank you for that very excellent salmon. Where did you get it, Corny?'

'It come by chance, Master George. 'Tis grand weather for the hay, so it is. I had to take an' cut an extra field of hay this year as I hadn't enough on me own little bit of land to feed all me beasts over the winter.'

'What field did you take?' I asked, seeing once again that it was useless to press the most skilful dissembler in the west.

'Oh, down by Carna bridge, Master George.'

'Carna bridge! What's all this about ghosts and drownings down there, Corny?'

Corny eyed me imperturbably.

'Poor hay it is, too. Young Pat Doolan was cutting the next bit to me.'

'Pat Doolan,' I said. 'Glad to hear he's doing a bit of work. He's the biggest poacher in the barony. Got a month last time he was up, didn't he?'

'He did so, the poor lad, though he's no friend to me, since that trouble I had with the Doolans over that horse I sold his pa. Still, 'twas hard on the boy. Him to be cutting hay beside the big pool all the week. An' the salmon lying there by the hundred.'

The water was that low their backs was nearly out of the water, an' every time young Doolan would walk over towards the bank with a hay fork who wouldn't he see but one of them damn bailiffs watching him.'

'The bailiffs know too much about Pat Doolan,' I said.

'Well, Master George, it fair broke his heart, an' I had it in me to pity him' (I wonder, thought I; your sorrow for others generally helps yourself); 'an' I met him one evening leanin' over the bridge an' watching the fish in the pool below.

"Good evening, Pat," says I.

"Good evening, Mr. Cassidy," says he.

"There's a power of fish down there," sez I.

"Be damn to them, but there are," sez he; "there are more there now too than in the afternoon."

"Oh," says I, "some of them likely slips in under the bridge for shelter when the sun's very strong. 'Tis a fine bridge, Pat. I mind when 'twas built more than forty years ago. Very overgrown it is too with all them bushes on the bank an' that hanging ivy. The man what built it med a grand job of it. Very wide foundations to the centre arches. Made the centre buttresses so thick that when he wanted to run up the arches he didn't need to do them so wide, so he left a little ledge about a foot wide on each side of the centre arch. I suppose with the dry weather they'd be about a foot above the water-level. 'Tis funny how they don't show from above or from the banks. Well well, how time goes when an old man gets talking. I doubt is there a man in Carna would know or mind that. I must be going along, Pat Doolan, for we'll not be working to-morrow, seeing 'tis the holiday an' I have one or two things to finish."

'Next morning, Master George, I was up before dawn, for I remembered I'd left me hay fork down near Carna—an'——'

'Cassidy,' said I, 'tell the truth and shame the devil, you expected to find more than a hay fork.'

Mr. Cassidy eyed me reproachfully and continued:

'Well, when I got near the bridge, who did I see but young Pat Doolan slipping along with what looked damn like a gaff in his hand, so I watched him to see what he'd do. Well, he creeps down to the bushes below the bridge and then starts to undress himself, taking off all except his shirt. He then hides his clothes in the bushes and starts to wade out towards the main arch, about three feet deep it was, an' in with him under the bridge. Sez I

to myself, you'll have the long wait, Pat Doolan, for the fish'll not go under the bridge till near midday, and you'll have the job to get out till late to-night. However, 'twill be a very hot day, so ye'll not be too bad. I expect, Master George, he'd not thought much of how he'd come out, being so set on a salmon. Well, I went home again an' I didn't come back to the bridge till near one o'clock. On me way to the bridge who did I meet but Johnny Farrell over from Rossmore mountain to see his sister.

"Good day to you, Johnny," sez I.

"Good day, Corny," sez he.

"Grand weather for the hay," sez I, "though signs by it looks terrible like rain before night."

"Rain," sez Johnny. "Rain, there was a cloud-burst up in the hills above Rossmore last night that I never saw the like of. 'Tis a wonder the Carna's not coming down in a big flood by now, so it is."

"I expect the mills above are holding it back," sez I, "but they'll be letting it go presently." That's the way they do on the Carna, Master George, hold the water for a bit an' then let her go with a rush, especially this time o' year when they're not looking out for a flood. Many's the time I've seen the river dead low an' clear an' then a roar an' a rush an' a wall o' water a foot high would come down an' she'd be in a brown flood before ye could wink.

"'Tis likely," sez Johnny; "well, good-bye, Corny, I must go along to me sister."

'Well, I went on down to the bridge an' the more I thought of young Pat Doolan roosting like a hen on that ledge under it, the more I laughed, but that wasn't the best of it. I was leaning over the bridge talking to one or two of the neighbours when I heard the roar of the water coming down.

"Begob," sez Timsey Doyle. "Here's the flood, boys." Well, it went through the bridge like a flash an' sez I to myself: "That's about up to your knees now, Pat Doolan, you'll be lucky if it doesn't rise above your waist."

'Well, we stayed a bit talkin' an' watching it, an' presently some of the children came along an' started playing about along the bank. Well, you know children, Master George, there's nothing they don't see an' doesn't wan of them find Pat Doolan's clothes. Well, he lets a roar out of him an' pulls them out from under the bush. Everyone jumps up.

"Begob," sez Timsey Doyle. "Something's happened here; come an' we'll look," so we all ran down to the children.

"What's this at all?" sez Johnny Driscoll; "someone has been drowned. He must ha' gone in swimmin' in the pool in his shirt. Whose clothes are they at all, Timsey?"

"Timsey looks at them careful. "'Tis new good clothes they are too," sez he. "But there's five hundred suits like this being worn to-day in Carna an' no name to them but Matt Doyle, tailor, Cranmore, where all the lads get their Sunday suits. Let's see if we can find anything that'll tell us in the pockets."

"Well, they searched the clothes, but divil the thing could they find but a half-empty packet of fags an' a box of matches. Nothing else. Now, I was watching the bridge an' didn't I see young Doolan's head for a second come out round the buttress an' then back in again, an' I hurt meself trying not to laugh.

"There's bad work here, Johnny," sez Timsey. "Away you on your bicycle as fast as you can to Cranmore an' get the guards. 'Tis their job."

"So Johnny Driscoll went away off on his bike as hard as he could pelt an' the rest of us stayed at the bridge. Ye see I could say nothing, Master George, it would have been three months without the option for young Pat Doolan if he'd been caught after salmon again, to say nothing of his being the joke of Carna for the rest of his life. Well, you know how news spreads; by the time Johnny Driscoll comes back with the sergeant an' two guards there must have been a couple of hundred people on the spot.

"The sergeant he comes down an' he examines the clothes.

"No clues here," sez he. "'Tis so we'll have to try an' find the body, likely the poor fellow will be below in the pool; we'll have to start an' drag for him."

"Well, Master George, better sport I never saw than watching them guards drag the river. They had no proper drags like, but only home-made contrivances. I must say they recovered quite a lot. Old pots an' pans an' bits of wood. A dead dog that Con Clancy had drowned an' all sorts of things. What with people trying to help them an' getting in the way, didn't the sergeant end by getting shoved in by Timsey Doyle. 'Twas better than a circus an' it went on till nine o'clock that night. Finally the sergeant says: "'Tis no use, boys; take the clothes up to the barracks an' put enquiries round everywhere to see who is missing." After the guards had gone people stayed about for nearly another hour

an' then they began to drift off to their homes. Finally about eleven o'clock there was no one left except meself. I'd gone off about nine, but I came back again later an' hid in the bushes where Pat Doolan had put his clothes as I wanted to see the end of it. 'Twas near dark by then, but you could still see. Well, about ten minutes after out from the centre arch comes me bold Pat, an' begob he'd done well; cold as he was, he had four grand salmon. I waited till he'd climbed up the bank an' then I thought I'd speak to him like an' tell him all the fun he'd caused, but—no sooner did I step out from the bush beside him, 'tis probable he thought I was the bailiff, than he gave a yell, dropped the fish an' away off over the country as hard as he could run with his white shirt flapping out behind him; then I heard the most horrible screech from the road an' another screech ('twas Peggy Farrell an' Mary Doyle going home). The two girls thought they'd seen a ghost an' away off with them down the road screaming as they ran. That's all the ghost part of it, Master George,' said Corny, knocking out his pipe, 'but better keep it close. I'm glad you enjoyed the salmon.'

W. Ireland.

THE RUNNING BROOKS.

- The War of the Guns* : Aubrey Wade (Batsford, 7s. 6d. n.).
Journey to the Western Front : Twenty Years After : R. H. Mottram (Bell, 7s. 6d. n.).
The Role of British Strategy in the Great War : C. R. M. F. Cruttwell (Cambridge University Press, 3s. 6d. n.).
The American Ideal : Arthur Bryant (Longmans, 10s. 6d. n.).
The Desert Fathers : Translations from the Latin : Helen Waddell (Constable, 7s. 6d. n.).
Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres : Henry Adams (Constable, 12s. 6d. n.).
Aspects of Wilde : Vincent O'Sullivan (Constable, 10s. n.).
Honorius Lawrence : A Fragment of Indian History : Maud Diver (Murray, 16s. n.).
Collected Poems : Geoffrey Winthrop Young (Methuen, 12s. 6d. n.).
Selections from the Poems of Dorothy Wellesley (Macmillan, 5s. n.).
Duke Street : Michael Campbell (Methuen, 7s. 6d. n.).

ALTHOUGH August is the holiday month of months, and the calendar of its days is decorated for many of us with joyous expectation, it bears one date whose sombre significance remains, for the older generation at any rate, something which no increasing count of years or happiness can ever wipe from shrinking memory. It is therefore with deliberate intent that we head our list for this anniversary month with three books about the Great War.

The first, Mr. Aubrey Wade's *The War of the Guns*, is an extremely well-written record of the author's personal experiences as an artillery signaller on the western front in 1917 and 1918, a record illustrated—often with almost unbearable poignancy and horror—by more than one hundred and twenty photographs from the collection of the Imperial War Museum. Such pictures may perhaps make the book impossible for the general reader. Those who can face—they will not soon forget—they will find this simple, direct chronicle extraordinarily impressive.

In Mr. R. H. Mottram's *Journey to the Western Front* the guns have been silenced, the wounds of war, superficially at least, are healed. For this is twenty years after, and the battlefields, reconditioned, rebuilt, relived in, are for Mr. Mottram, as for numbers of his readers, thickly peopled with ghosts. Not that he is

altogether pleased with what he has seen during this survey, and many of his drastic comments on present reconstruction have a nostalgic undercurrent of feeling for that destructive past which he evokes with such graphic and incisive clarity. 'On the whole,' however, he 'quitted the battlefields very considerably reassured. . . . It is not so easy to obliterate life as short-sighted and ill-disposed people have always hoped. Inanimate Nature makes short work of our exhausting efforts to turn her into a mortuary. . . . I do not feel that all those men died in vain. . . . I feel that humanity is immeasurably more awake than it was twenty-five years ago, and that all those deaths have made it so.'

Mr. C. R. M. F. Cruttwell's *The Rôle of British Strategy in the Great War*—lectures recently delivered for the Lees-Knowles Foundation at Trinity College—strikes of necessity a different, impersonal note. But as a record, as an analysis, and as criticism this slender volume is a most valuable and illuminating exposition of the facts and theories which led its author to the conclusion that, in the Great War, this country's 'actual share in the determination of Allied strategy on land remained surprisingly small.'

The studies of eight men 'who in their different ways have illustrated aspects of American life and thought' which comprise Mr. Arthur Bryant's *The American Ideal* were, in substance, given at the request of the Sulgrave Manor Board as the Watson Foundation Lectures in the autumn of last year. In volume form they make, like everything from his pen, felicitous and instructive reading, touched with imaginative insight, and bridging in bold outline at any rate a portion of the gap in knowledge and understanding resulting from the fact that 'Englishmen to their loss are not taught the history of the United States.' Mr. Bryant's plan has been to illustrate that history in terms of the representative personalities of statesmen and poets—Jefferson, Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt and Walter Page, Emerson and Whitman, Alan Seeger and Vachel Lindsay. Some may question the sum total of his choice. But no reader of these fluent, sympathetic pages can fail to become aware of the importance of their subject, or of the vastness of the issues, past, present, and future, with which it is involved.

What Miss Helen Waddell herself calls 'the strange timelessness' of the *Vita Patrum* permeates each single page of *The Desert Fathers*, her latest translations from the Latin, and a very welcome successor to that enchanting volume, 'Beasts and Saints.' Nor is there any comment to be made upon it except to say that what the

author set out to do she has most beautifully achieved, interpreting the rich simplicities of the ancient prose in all the gracious austerity of its gentle, mystical spirit, and, in her Introduction, revealing once again how profound has been her study, how wise and perceptive is her understanding of these desert anchorites who, as she puts it, 'stamped infinity on the imagination of the West' and whose lives have 'affected the consciousness of generations to which they are not even a name.'

Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres, by Mr. Henry Adams, is also richly steeped in the medieval atmosphere and tradition of its subject, an atmosphere in which the reader finds himself consorting in comradely fashion with abbots and kings and *jongleurs* in the great refectory of the monastery-church crowned by its aspirant Archangel, symbol of the Church Militant. From the stern simplicity of its Norman building he is transported to Chartres, the Gothic dream of lovers of Mary, Queen of Heaven. And moving amid these architectural glories of the past are the men and women whose lives were in some way linked with them. At the sure and sympathetic touch of the author Duke William of Normandy, Harold the Saxon, Eleanor of Guienne, Blanche of Castile, Abelard, William de Champeaux, St. Francis, St. Thomas Aquinas and many another are recreated as living, vivid personalities.

Claiming no very intimate acquaintance with Oscar Wilde and obviously as clearly aware of his shortcomings as of his virtues, Mr. Vincent O'Sullivan has well defined the scope of his *Aspects of Wilde* in its title. For this very interesting, sympathetic and observant study is confined, on its personal side at least, to impressions of Wilde's last days in Paris, a record designed to lift him 'out of the miasmas which still float round his name,' and the portrait which emerges is both firmly outlined and convincingly toned. So too is the graphic sketch of Leonard Smithers, that strange, almost fantastic figure of the publishing world of the 'nineties. Altogether an eminently readable book, interesting alike to the student of temperament and of literary history.

The story of *Honoria Lawrence*, wife of one of the two brothers whose names are immortally associated with the history of British rule in India, has been told by Mrs. Maud Diver with great skill and charm in a book that, despite its more than five hundred pages, holds our interest from first to last. Biographical in form and most appealingly interspersed with numerous extracts from Honoria Lawrence's own letters and diaries, its lovely story of enduring love

and bravery is revealed with such quietness, with such a delicate touch upon the reins of emotion and drama as only an accomplished novelist can control—a notable achievement, not only in its portrait of a great man's wife, but also in its reconstruction of 'the whole stormy period' during which these married lovers 'courageously lived and worked together' and which culminated in the Indian Mutiny.

Both the poetic and adventurous preoccupation of Mr. Geoffrey Winthrop Young with

'the chief things of the ancient mountains,
and the precious things of the everlasting hills'

is given often fine, and always sensitive, expression in *Collected Poems*, a volume which, though it contains a number of poems on other subjects, draws its deepest inspiration from, and achieves its furthest vision in the

'land of the silvery glacier fire,
land of the cloud and the starry choir,
magical land of hills.'

In his Introduction to *Selections from the Poems of Dorothy Wellesley* Mr. W. B. Yeats confesses to 'a moment's jealousy' on his first reading of 'Matrix,' the longest piece in the present volume, which he describes as 'perhaps the most moving philosophic poem of our time.' However that may be for the ordinary and unqualified reader, one at least admits to having read the whole book at a sitting, the rôle of commentator forgotten in the compulsion of its sudden 'rightness' in word or rhythm, its coloured, urgent images, its warmth and coolness, its emotional movement and repose.

Mr. Michael Campbell's *Duke Street* is a sad little novel, squalid in setting and often in incident, yet not without its fugitive contacts with beauty in aspiration and character. It is indeed a book to which the hard-worked adjective realistic is obviously applicable, since its story of the marriage between the tuberculous-doomed Jock and the 'fallen' Peggy—he dominated by his devoted, drink-loving father, she fleeing from her hard-hitting, termagant mother—contains much shrewd and sympathetic observation of life in mean streets and of the courageous fatalism which is too often their occupants' only refuge.

M. E. N.

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 154.

THE EDITOR of the CORNHILL offers two prizes of books to the value of £1 from John Murray's catalogue, to the two solvers of the Literary Acrostic whose letters are opened first. Answers must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must contain the Coupon from page iii of the preliminary pages of this issue. They must reach the Editor by the 29th August.

'With moonlight beams of their own watery light;
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with ——— ———.'

1. 'To tinge, on syren ———, the salt sea-spry?'
2. 'An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But ——— ! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!'
3. 'The moth's kiss, first!
Kiss me as if you made ———
You were not sure, this eve,'
4. 'for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ——— on such a day.'
5. '——— ! all night my lamp's burning,
All night, like it, my wide eyes watch and burn;'

Answer to Acrostic 152, June number: 'And knows not all the *DEPTHS* of its *REGRETS*' (Lytton: 'A Night in Italy'). 1. *DoweR* (Richard Crashaw: 'Upon the Book and Picture of the Seraphical St. Teresa'). 2. *ErE* (Milton: 'Lycidas'). 3. *PassinG* (Matthew Prior: 'For My Own Monument'). 4. *ThinneR* (Tennyson: 'Blow, Bugle, Blow'). 5. *HenceE* (Milton: 'Il Penseroso'). 6. *Steepest* ('Love Will Find Out The Way').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Mrs. C. N. Scriven, The Beeches, Stepney Road, Scarborough, and Miss Holmes, Heatherlea, Rothbury. These two solvers are invited to choose books to the value of £1 from John Murray's catalogue.

